Court accepts stay agreement between 7 workers and IPI. PAGE 3
Torres accepts MMA champ's call to live, lead fit. PAGE 6

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXII, Issue No. 40

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Man dies after jumping off building

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man died late yesterday morning after he jumped off the third floor of the Bencam Building in Garapan.

According to Department of Public Safety spokesperson Adrian Pangelinan, police continue to investigate the case.

Saipan Tribune learned that the man was identified as Roland Kapileo, 43. He jumped off of the third floor of the building at around 11:30am yesterday and was pronounced dead at the Commonwealth Health Center at about 11:44am by Dr. James Gilbert.

Pangelinan said that, as of 5pm press time, police have already spoken with witnesses at the scene and with Kapileo's significant other and further details of the incident will be released when they become

See MAN on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Photo shows the Bencam Building in Garapan where a man jumped off the third floor late yesterday morning. The man's car is still parked in front of the building hours after the incident.

AT A GLANCE

As of 6:03pm, Feb. 24, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Additional Dose Vaccinated: **56.2%**

Days since last community transmission: **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	38,000
Fully Vaccinated:	37,082
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,330
Fully Vaccinated:	5,191
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,137
Additional Dose:	20,967

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	43,560	276	43,836
Recovered	40,003	49	40,052
Active	3,187	276	3,463
Deaths	320	1	321

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	8,882	226	9,108
Recovered	7,569	565	8,134
Active	721	226	947
Deaths	27	0	27

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

COVID UPDATE

226 new cases; 8 hospitalized

Two hundred twenty-six additional individuals have been confirmed positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI total to 9,108 cases since March 26, 2020.

» **Guam records 321st COVID-19-related death**

As of Feb. 23, 2022, there were eight individuals hospitalized as a result of COVID-19, three of them unvaccinated, three who are vaccinated, and two who are partially vac-

See 226 on Page 4

Russia attacks Ukraine as defiant Putin warns US, NATO

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV, DASHA LITVINOVA, YURAS KARMANAU and JIM HEINTZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW (AP)—Russian troops launched their anticipated attack on Ukraine on Thursday, as President Vladimir Putin cast aside international condemnation and sanctions, warning other countries that any attempt to interfere would lead to "consequences you have never seen."

Big explosions were heard before dawn in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odesa as world leaders decried the start of an Russian invasion that could cause massive casualties and topple Ukraine's democratically elected government.

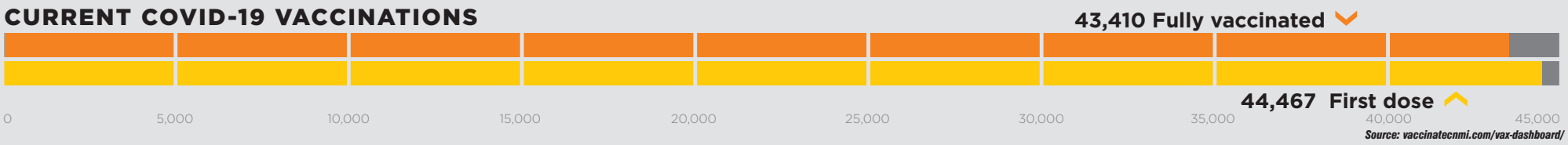
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy introduced martial law, saying Russia has targeted Ukraine's military infrastructure and explosions are heard across the country. Zelenskyy said he had just talked to President Joe Biden and the U.S. was rallying international support for Ukraine. He urged Ukrainians to stay home and not to panic

Biden pledged new sanctions meant to punish Russia for an act of aggression that the international community had for weeks anticipated but could not prevent through diplomacy.

Putin justified it all in a televised address, asserting the attack was needed to protect civilians in eastern Ukraine—a false claim the U.S. had predicted he would make as a

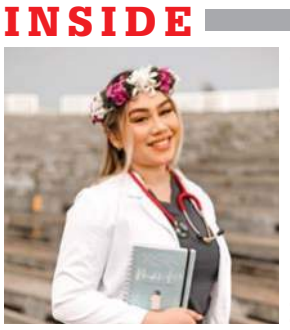
See RUSSIA on Page 4

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



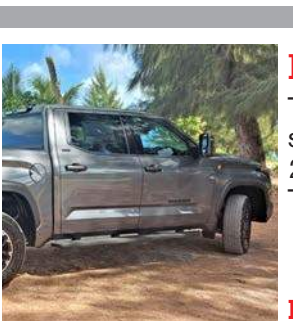
Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE



LOCAL
Peachy Quitugua earns her masters degree and is certified in nurse midwifery.

Page 11



BUSINESS
Twenty-two years since its launch, the 2022 TRD Toyota Tundra will amaze you.

Page 14

SCIENCE & TECH
A roughly 9,000-year-old shrine is found at a Neolithic site in Jordan's eastern desert.

Page 18

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Local

Camacho says he was not informed of divert airfield project groundbreaking

Camacho

Rep. Vicente Camacho (D-Saipan), who chairs the House of Representatives Federal and Foreign Affairs Committee, said Tuesday that there was a groundbreaking for the divert airfield project on Tinian that day, but the Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs did not inform him about the event.

As of press time Wednesday night, *Saipan Tribune* was still awaiting comments from Glenna Sakisat Palacios, who is the special assistant to the Governor for Military Affairs.

At the House session, Camacho urged the CBMA chief to inform him of such events taking place in the CNMI, since he is chairman of the Federal and Foreign Affairs Committee.

Rep. Richard T. Lizama (D-Saipan) agreed with Camacho, saying it's totally unacceptable to have the chairman be not informed of the event. He said it is unfair to Camacho.

"I just hope that the governor and the Military Affairs Office will inform our chairman of this House for any future activity," he said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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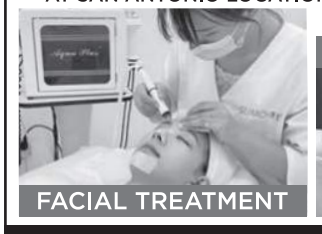
FACIAL TREATMENT

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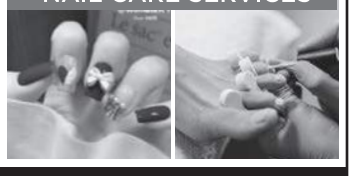

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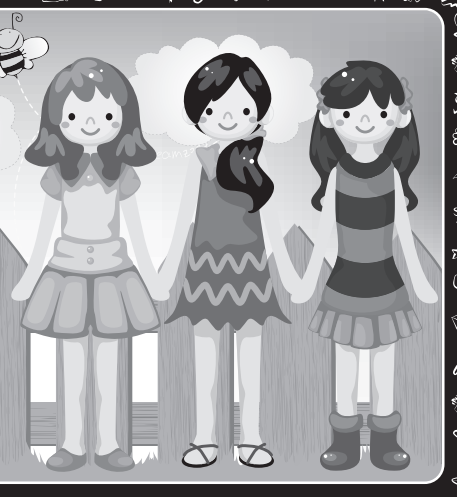

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Court accepts stay agreement between 7 workers and IPI

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly.esmores@saipantribune.com

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has accepted the stay agreement between Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC and seven former workers who had sued the company for labor violations.

According to her order, District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona found the stay agreement in its entirety sufficient to warrant a stay on the default judgement previously granted in favor of the former workers.

"The stay agreement, including the three executed mortgages (and all other appendices attached) is approved in its entirety by the court, and all parties to that stay agreement are ordered to comply with its terms and conditions. Furthermore, the stay agreement and its appendices are deemed sufficient to warrant a stay," she ordered.

Manglona also affirmed that the plaintiffs maintain a valid lien as to IPI's personal property, other than IPI's gaming equipment.

"This lien shall remain in place until IPI has complied with all its obligations under the stay agreement, and that IPI shall not transfer, pledge, or otherwise encumber its personal property without the express written consent of plaintiffs or permission of this court. In addition, the court shall retain jurisdiction over the enforcement of any provision of the stay agreement," the judge said.

Previously, the court issued a judgment in this matter in favor of the workers in the amount of $5,430,595.58.

IPI appealed the judgment to the Ninth Circuit, but initially did not post a bond or any security.

In response, the plaintiffs commenced efforts to enforce their judgment, including obtaining a writ of execution on IPI's personal property which was executed by the U.S. Marshals on July 20, 2021.

The workers and IPI then executed an agreement to stay enforcement that includes multiple appendices, with an effective date of Feb. 3, 2022, which shall stay enforcement of their default judgement in exchange for IPI securing a supersedeas bond in the amount of $6 million on or before June 30, 2022.

IPI fulfilled its initial obligations under the stay agreement by securing a supersedeas bond in the amount of $1 million on Feb. 11, 2022, and reimbursing certain expenses and a portion of the legal fees incurred by plaintiffs in seeking to enforce their judgment prior to executing the stay agreement.

On Feb. 18, 2022, the parties filed a stipulation finding that the stay agreement in its entirely, including all appendices, provides plaintiffs with adequate security.

Torres responds to House comments on retiree bonus

Torres

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres on Thursday issued the following response regarding the House of Representatives' rejection of the Senate's bill amendment to increase retiree bonuses to $1000:

"First off, I would like to thank the Senate for their immediate action after being informed of this issue, since the beginning. Further, I want to thank them for acknowledging the needs of the retirees in their decision to increase the bonus amount from $500 to $1000."

"The House was presented with the opportunity to give retirees a larger bonus in their session, but chose to reject the Senate's amendment. I am very disappointed at their decision to do that, especially because it has already been almost three months since the initial retiree bonus was supposed to come out.

"If they really cared for the retirees, they would make this bonus happen for them because they are the appropriating branch of government. If you truly believe that this is political, please look at your own actions. You are holding back well-deserved bonuses for retirees who have worked hard for this Commonwealth because of your own political agendas and your own dislike for me as a governor. We may have our differences in opinions on how to spend funds, but I make the decisions that I make based on what is in the best interests of the people of this Commonwealth.

"The Senate saw fit that I'd be given 100% reprogramming authority to ensure that the retiree bonuses would be fully funded and so that similar issues like this could be avoided in the future. Even after both my administration and the Senate offered viable solutions to address this issue, the House still did not agree. This is an important issue for all retirees, therefore, if they do not like the suggestions we have made, I urge the House to offer their own solutions. Let's just get our retirees their bonuses.

"The retirees know that I have always made them a priority, and moving forward, I always will." ***(PR)***

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/s/ Joselito L. Ranjo /s/ Florefie V. Villaraza

The Mobility Space is Getting Greener in the Northern Mariana Islands
The mobility space is getting greener in the Northern Mariana Islands, as Enterprise Saipan announced today that it has acquired hybrid vehicles as part of its fleet of vehicles serving Saipan.
This investment not only supports demand for safe and reliable mobility options during the COVID-19 crisis but also demonstrates Enterprise's commitment to supporting local economies and driving forward environmentally friendly modes of transportation across the islands as they move out of travel restrictions.
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Torres unconcerned which gubernatorial opponent is stronger

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said his least concern right now is which of his two gubernatorial opponents—Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Rep. Christina Sablan (D-Saipan)—is a stronger opponent in the Nov. 8 gubernatorial race.

In response to a question about the election during a radio press briefing, Torres said he is not thinking about who is stronger or weaker as his concern is to continue focusing on government retirees' 100% pension benefits and rebuilding the CNMI economy.

Torres

Sablan

Palacios

"My concern is to move forward on what people voted for me to do and what I need to do," he said.

The governor said he is hoping that the Legislature will actually act on giving the bonus to government retirees, which is now at $1,000 per retiree.

Torres vowed to continue giving the retirees their 100% pension benefits and also giving them more bonus as time progresses.

He said he wants to make sure to revive the CNMI's economy by bringing back the Japanese tourists, even as the Korean tourists have already started trickling in. The governor said they want to reach out to other tourist destinations as well.

He said they want to give job opportunities to the youth and build a stronger relationship with the U.S. Department of Defense.

Torres said his running mate, Sen. Vinnie Sablan (R-Saipan), is moving to make sure that the youth get job opportunities when they graduate.

He added that they are also working with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. to expand the hospital.

"It's the right time to do it. And we do have good vision moving forward," the governor said.

RUSSIA

From Page 1

pretext for an invasion. He accused the U.S. and its allies of ignoring Russia's demand to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and offer Moscow security guarantees, and credulously claimed that Russia doesn't intend to occupy Ukraine but will move to "demilitarize" it and bring those who committed crimes to justice.

Biden in a written statement condemned the "unprovoked and unjustified attack" on Ukraine and he promised the U.S. and its allies "will hold Russia accountable." Biden said he planned to speak to Americans on Thursday after a meeting of the Group of Seven leaders. More sanctions against Russia were expected to be announced Thursday.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba described the action as a "full-scale invasion of Ukraine" and a "war of aggression," adding, "Ukraine will defend itself and will win. The world can and must stop Putin. The time to act is now."

The Russian military said it has struck Ukrainian air bases and other military assets and hasn't targeted populated areas. The Russian Defense Ministry statement said the military is using precision weapons to target Ukrainian air bases, air defense assets and other military infrastructure. It claimed that "there is no threat to civilian population."

Anton Gerashchenko, an adviser to Ukraine's interior minister, said on Facebook that the Russian military has launched missile strikes on Ukrainian military command facilities, air bases and military depots in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Dnipro.

After the initial explosions in Kyiv, people could be heard shouting in the streets. But then a sense of normality returned, with cars circulating and people walking in the streets as a pre-dawn commute appeared to be starting in relative calm.

Beyond casualties that could overwhelm Ukraine's government, the consequences of the conflict and resulting sanctions levied on Russia could reverberate throughout the world, affecting energy supplies in Europe, jolting global financial markets and threatening the post-Cold War balance on the continent.

Asian stock markets plunged and oil prices surged after the military action got underway. Earlier, Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index fell 1.8% to an eight-month low after the Kremlin said rebels in eastern Ukraine asked for military assistance.

MAN

From Page 1

available.

Saipan Tribune visited the scene and spoke with individuals who lived nearby and neighboring establishments. According to two men who worked in the area, they said they noticed Kapileo pacing back and forth on the third floor of the building at around 11am that day.

They said he was alone and was just walking up and down the floor for a while. Then, after a few minutes, they saw him climb over the railing and jump off, falling faced down onto the pavement below.

The two men noted that Kapileo doesn't live in the building or even in the area, but he does frequent the vicinity because he was friends with a lot of people who live there.

Another woman who worked in the building said she wasn't aware of what had happened but there were police and Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services officers out front at around 11am.

She said she couldn't really tell what was going on, but she just assumed that someone was getting arrested again so she didn't think much of it.

At the scene, aside from a small amount of blood, you wouldn't be able to tell that a tragic incident had occurred.

The DPS spokesperson explained that, although the case remains under investigation, the area is not blocked off because police believe it is not necessary.

"Police markings of the scene are used when police need to return to the scene at a later time. Due to the nature of this specific scene, police do not believe that blocking off the area is necessary," he said.

In addition, Kapileo's car remained parked out front of the building and all his friends who came out to pay their respects confirmed that Kapileo was expected to be in the area yesterday and they were all so shocked to hear of his passing.

Uncertain future for islanders who survived Tongan eruption

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—The first two booms from the volcano were scary enough, but the third explosion was immense, sending everyone from the village running from their homes in a reaction that would save all but one of their lives.

Even now, more than five weeks later, the children from Mango Island still often run or cower when they hear a thunderclap or loud noise.

The small island in Tonga was one of the closest places to the Jan. 15 South Pacific volcanic eruption, an event so massive it sent out a sonic boom that could be heard in Alaska and a mushroom plume of ash that was seen in startling images taken from space. On Mango Island, every single home was destroyed by the tsunami that followed.

All 62 survivors were rescued by boat and moved to Tonga's capital, Nuku'alofa, where they have been living together since in a church hall. Most of that time they've been in lockdown after Tonga experienced its first outbreak of the coronavirus.

Two of the survivors described their experiences and uncertain future to The Associated Press in an interview that was translated by an official from the Tonga Red Cross.

Sione Vailea, 52, said Mango Island is the prettiest place he knows and nothing compares to it in all of Tonga. Just 14 families lived on the island, he said, all of them close together in a single village.

Each family owned a small, open-sided boat and each morning the weather was favorable, they would go onto the ocean to catch reef fish, snapper, octopus and lobster.

What they couldn't eat themselves they would take to the capital to sell, getting enough money to buy food and other necessities. For those fortunate enough to have a decent-sized engine on their boats, it was a six-hour return journey to the capital, but it could take double that time for those puttering along on 15 horsepower.

Mango Island is a little over 20 miles (32 kilometers) from the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai undersea volcano, which back in late 2014 had rumbled to life, creating a small, new island and briefly disrupting air travel in a series of eruptions.

But those were nothing compared to the scale of eruption that took place on that Saturday evening in January. When the islanders heard the third massive boom, they began running from their low-lying village up a nearby hill, the highest point on Mango Island.

"There was no sign that there was going to be a tsunami, but our gut feeling was we needed to get up to the top, because we weren't sure what was happening," Vailea said.

As the island's appointed town officer, Vailea checked to make sure everybody was gathered. He noticed one family was missing.

226

From Page 1

cinated. Two of the eight are on ventilators.

In Guam, the Joint Information Center was notified that Guam's 321st COVID-19-related fatality was pronounced dead on arrival at the Guam Regional Medical City on Feb. 8, 2022. The patient was a 33-year-old male, fully vaccinated without a booster, who had underlying health conditions and tested positive on Feb. 8.

The JIC statement quotes Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero as saying: "While we have made so much progress in this pandemic, with each loss we are reminded that our fight with this virus continues. To his family and loved ones, we grieve with you and extend our prayers and sympathies during this difficult time."

Of the 226 new cases in the CNMI who were identified on Feb. 22, 2022, a total of 13 were identified on Tinian. The vaccination statuses of the 226 cases are pending verification.

Of the total cases that have been identified in the CNMI so far, as of Feb. 22, 2022, there have been 8,134 recoveries; 947 active cases; and 27 COVID-19-related deaths.

A total of 8,461 were identified via community testing, while 647 were identified via travel testing.

A total of 75 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Feb. 23, 2022; of the eligible population, 56.1% have received an additional dose. The vaccination rate is calculated using the 2020 Census population estimates for the CNMI and includes the eligible 5-years-old and older population.

A total of 680 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Feb. 22, 2022: 422 via Community-Based Testing; 191 at Koblerville COVID-19 Community Center; 44 at the Tinian Health Center; and 23 at the Rota Health Center.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should stay home and isolate when they are sick (except to get medical care), even if they do not have symptoms; rest; stay hydrated; can take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, to relieve symptoms; and live COVID-19 safe.

Individuals experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should stay home and live COVID-19 safe (except to get medical care or get tested for COVID-19). Other options include seeing their health care provider or calling the CHCC Tele-Triage hotline at (670) 233-2067. For a guidebook on how to live COVID-19 safe, visit www.staysafecnmi.com/livecovidsafe.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continues to encourage the community to get vaccinated if they have not done so, or get their booster shot if they are eligible to help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, or death. People considered high risk (e.g., history of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, or cancer, or over the age of 65), immunocompromised persons, or unvaccinated individuals are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Unvaccinated individuals spread the virus at a higher rate than vaccinated individuals, thereby increasing the spread and risk of serious illness toward other unvaccinated individuals.

Stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccination, which includes additional doses for individuals who are immunocompromised or booster doses for those who are eligible. Register for COVID-19 vaccines at www.vaccinatecnmi.com, or call (670) 682-7468.

Individuals aged 18 or older are now eligible to avail of a booster shot; 12- to 17-year-olds can avail of a Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot. Data from small clinical trials show that vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 infection is waning after the primary series, but protection remains high against severe disease and hospitalization.

To view the schedule for Community-Based Testing, visit https://covidtesting.chcc.health. No code is required to register. Pre-registration highly recommended as slots are limited. Reserve your slot to get tested before you line up and all slots are filled.

While you wait to get tested or for your test results, stay at home as much as possible and limit your contact with others. Live COVID-19 safe: wear your mask; wash your hands; watch your distance; avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces; cover coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily; be alert for symptoms daily; and get tested for COVID-19. ***(PR/Saipan Tribune)***

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Torres jump-starts weight loss journey

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Torres accepts MMA champ's call to live, lead fit

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is taking mixed martial arts champion Frank "The Crank" Camacho's challenge, which he had posted on social media last week.

"When I embarked on this fitness journey, I decided that I wanted to lengthen my physical presence with my family, especially my children. They are my motivation," said Torres.

Recently, Camacho, an Ultimate Fighting Championship warrior, lauded Torres' decision to improve his health through diet and physical activity.

"I don't really follow politics…but this right here is something I fully stand behind," Camacho said. "It's such a powerful message that is finally being addressed at the highest level."

Torres, well into his first full week of living a healthier lifestyle, was moved by Camacho's video, "I wholeheartedly thank Frank. He is a role model to so many people, young and old, of varying fitness levels, and of all walks of life. His influence in all things positive is far reaching, and that is something to be admired."

With this renewed inspiration in tow, Torres is even more determined to live a healthier life with his family and for the people of the Marianas. "This is not a competition, and I am not at all offended by Frank's challenge. I recognize that I have work to do to improve my health. In fact, I am so moved by his challenge that I will be asking him to create a regimen that will get me to where I need to be, and one that will allow me more time with my family and our amazing community."

Torres intends to share his progress with the people of the Commonwealth and he is hopeful that residents will catch the spirit and resolve to live healthier lifestyles for their loved ones.

"Having COVID-19 reinforced in me the importance and benefits of a healthier lifestyle, which helps prevent serious illnesses and diseases. The hardest part of attaining any goal is getting started. I am fresh into this journey, and I encourage everyone—including my family, friends, and cabinet—to join me. This is only the beginning of many opportunities for our community to come together, lift each other up, and help each other out," said Torres. ***(PR)***

"I get to appreciate life itself."

Thus stated Gov. Ralph DLG Torres in response to questions during a radio press briefing Friday about his health and why he has been seen lately doing regular physical fitness.

Torres currently weighs 250 lbs. At 42 years old, he is the youngest governor in the nation, a record that he holds for seven years now.

The governor has six children—his oldest is turning 16 and youngest is 6.

An aspect of being in politics is that Torres has had to attend to so many different funerals. "Every day I thank the Lord of having my mom here, having both my in-laws, my wife, my kids," Torres said.

The governor said he has realized that he is the only one that can make changes when it comes to his health, and that's through dedication. Torres said he is just prioritizing his health by eating less, focusing on healthy foods.

He said he talked to his wife, Diann, on making changes to his life.

"So I've been to the gym in the morning, waking up 4:30 in the morning," he said. "Don't expect me to get six-pack [abs] any time soon," he added, smiling.

The governor said every time he wakes up, his wife and three or four of their children are still in bed.

"I look at them and say I'll be back," Torres said.

He said he does not intend to ask anybody to be healthier as this is only his take because he wants to improve himself and start leading by example when it comes to health.

He acknowledged that it might take a while to cut his weight, but he's getting an outpouring support from different organizations and people in this journey.

"I'm not here to educate people about their health because I'm working on mine. But it feels good," Torres said.

COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CEDA)
PO Box 502149, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. No. 670-234-6245 | Fax: 670-235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Friday, February 25, 20221

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION DIVISION (DCD) OF THE COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CEDA) THRU ITS CHAIRMAN HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE DCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL HOLD ITS REGULAR MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022 AT 2:00 P.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CEDA CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CEDA BUILDING, OLEAI, SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  A. Call to Order
  B. Roll Call
  C. Adoption of Agenda
  D. Election of Officers
  E. Adoption of Minutes:
    1. August 10, 2021
    2. October 28, 2021
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. REPORTS
  A. DCD Financial Status
IV. OLD BUSINESS
  A. Update on Online Loan Applications & Loan Management System
V. NEW BUSINESS
  A. Review & Board Action on the Amendments to the DCD Rules & Regulations
  B. Deliberation & Board Action on Loan Applications & Loan Matters, as follows:
    1. Estate of John DLG. Pangelinan
    2. Island Development Corporation (Jesus M.V. Guerrero)
    3. Christopher & Diana Hocog
    4. Martin & Crystal Pangelinan
    5. Nadia B. Manglona
    6. M.B. Realty
    7. William & Corrine Cing
    8. Roy C. Manglona
    9. Domingo Hocog
    10. Martha C. Barcinas
    11. Julenolf C. Jacob
    12. Tim San Nicolas
    13. Juan A. Barcinas
    14. Debt Relief Clients on Set-Aside Int.
    15. Judgment Debts
    16. Non-Performing Loans
  C. Discussion & Board Action on FLIB Loan Program
  D. Deliberation & Board Action to Increase the Loan Approval Cap Delegated to the Executive Director
  E. Discussion and Board Action on Loan Decision Process
VI. OTHER MATTERS
VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
VIII. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. (Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 1(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/ FRANK LEE SN. BORJA
Chairman, DCD Board of Directors

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Tel. No. 670-234-6245 | Fax: 670-235-7147
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Friday, February 25, 20221

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CEDA) THRU ITS CHAIRWOMAN, HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE CEDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REGULAR MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022 AT 2:00 P.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CEDA CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CEDA BUILDING, OLEAI SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  A. Call to Order
  B. Roll Call
  C. Adoption of Agenda
  D. Adoption of Minutes
    1. Aug. 10, 2021 Regular Meeting 2. Oct. 20, 2021 Special Meeting
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. REPORTS
  A. Executive Director's Report
    1. Administrative/Personnel Matters:
      a. Deliberation & Board Action on the Recruitment of Economic Development Manager
      b. Deliberation & Board Action of Executive Director's Employment Contract
      c. Review & Board Action on CEDA's Position Classification
      d. Review and Board Action on FY 2023 CEDA Budget
      e. Review & Board Action on the Amendment to the CEDA Board By-Laws
      f. Board Action on the Amendment to the DCD Rules & Regulations
    2. Loan Matters:
      a. Deliberation & Board Action on the Estate of Herman & Joyce Palacios
      b. Deliberation & Board Action on the Estate of John DLG. Pangelinan
      c. Deliberation & Board Action on Island Development Corporation/ Jesus M.V. Guerrero
      d. Deliberation & Board Action on the Set-Aside Interest for Debt Relief Clients
      e. Deliberation & Board Action on Judgment Debts
      f. Deliberation & Board Action on Non-Performing Loans
  B. Comptroller's Report
    1. Presentation of FY 2020 Audit Report
    2. CEDA & SSBCI Financial Status
    3. Deliberation & Board Action on Delinquent Receivables' Write Off
  C. Qualifying Certificate Program – Update, Review & Board Action on the Saipan Globe International Group QC Compliance Status
IV. OLD BUSINESS
  A. Deliberation & Board Action on the Policy & Guidelines on Disposal of CEDA Foreclosed Properties
  B. Update on the Saipan, Tinian & Rota Properties
V. NEW BUSINESS
  A. Review & Board Action on the $25M Bank of Guam Loan (Loan Revision)
VI. OTHER MATTERS
VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Your presence is highly appreciated.

/s/ AUBRY M. HOCOG
Chairwoman, CDA Board of Directors

Deadline nears for financial disclosure filing

This is to remind all Commonwealth public officials and/or employees who are required to file a statement of financial interest for calendar year 2021 under the Government Ethics Code Act of 1992 (1 CMC §8501, et seq.) that the deadline for filing a verified statement of financial interests is May 1, 2022. Any person failing to comply with the financial disclosure requirements is subject to penalties as set forth in 1 CMC §8517 through §8522 and 1 CMC §8571 through §8576, including a $10 per day penalty for periods of delinquency.

For more information, contact the Office of the Public Auditor at 322-6481/2, fax at 322-7812, or email: mail@opacnmi.com. You may also visit OPA's web site at www.opacnmi.com for information about filing requirements. ***(PR)***

DIESEL EXHAUST

Diesel is a type of fuel derived from crude oil. It is used in most large engines, including many trucks, buses, trains, construction and farm equipment, generators, ships, and in some cars. Diesel exhaust is produced by burning diesel fuel. The exhaust is a complex mixture of gases, vapors, aerosols, and particles that can be harmful to human health!

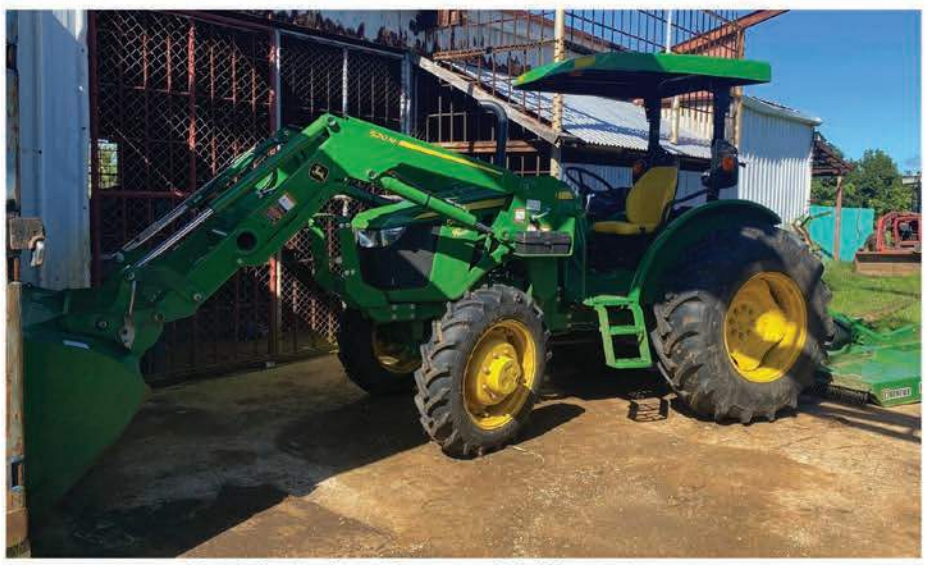
Short term exposure to diesel exhaust can cause coughs, headaches, nausea, allergic reactions causing asthma, and irritation of the eyes, nose, throat, and respiratory tract. Long term exposure increases the risk for serious health effects such as lung cancer.

WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO DIESEL EXHAUST

- Limit the amount of time you spend near running engines.
- If diesel fuel is necessary, choose Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel.
- Service your engines regularly to reduce exhaust fumes. If possible, replace old diesel engines.
- Report excessive diesel smoke to the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality!

DIESEL EMISSIONS REDUCTION ACT (DERA)

DERA grants and rebates, administered and awarded by US EPA, are intended to protect human health and improve air quality by reducing harmful emissions from diesel engines.



2021 John Deere Utility Tractor

1995 Massey Ferguson Tractor

- In 2020, the BECQ Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) secured a DERA grant, with the CNMI Department of Agriculture (DOA) as their sub-awardee, to replace DOA's agriculture tractor.
- A 1995 Massey Ferguson tractor with a Tier 1 engine was replaced with a 2021 John Deere tractor with a Tier 4 engine.
- Tier 4 certified engines meet EPA's strictest emission standards by significantly reducing air pollution, specifically emissions of particulate matter (PM) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx) to near zero levels!
- The DERA grant releases competitive and non-competitive funding opportunities on a yearly basis. Interested parties may contact the BECQ-DEQ Air Program to inquire about equipment eligibility and other program guidelines.
- Selected recipients may receive funding that covers up to 100% of the costs to replace existing diesel-powered vehicles, equipment, or engines!

For more information, please contact the DEQ Air Program at 670-664-8516 or email deq.air@becq.gov.mp

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

A cataclysmic event based on ego-driven lies. Sound familiar?

Shocking as Russia's invasion of Ukraine is, it should come as no surprise to anyone in the West. Russian President Vladimir Putin, performing exactly as the United States predicted, set up a straw-horse justification for invading Ukraine and is now acting on the basis of that lie. He used the same set of lies in 2014 to justify seizing and annexing Crimea and, in the same year, to arm separatist militants in two eastern regions of Ukraine. Key to Putin's fiction is the idea that Ukrainians oppressed by freedom and democracy are crying out to be united under his murderous dictatorship.

Russia is now launching the process of swallowing enough territory, combined with Crimea, to constitute a tenth of Ukraine's territory. In his speech Monday, Putin dismissed Ukraine as an artificial creation of Soviet communism and asserted that it belongs to greater Russia. His remarks Monday appeared to open the door to future military adventurism in Baltic states that won independence after the Soviet Union's collapse. President Joe Biden said Tuesday NATO is boosting its forces in those states, raising the specter of a direct NATO-Russia confrontation should Russia continue advancing troops, tanks and missiles westward.

Putin seems unfazed by threats of unprecedented Western sanctions, but he might soon change his mind. Germany has canceled certification of a new pipeline that Russia was counting on for natural gas export revenues. An international embargo on Russian oil also could inflict more economic hardship. But the mother of all sanctions still awaits: the freezing of all Russian government bank accounts abroad and its exclusion from the global Swift banking system, which could severely limit Moscow's ability to pay bills and collect revenue from abroad.

There's something oddly familiar about a scenario in which a cataclysmic event unfolds based entirely on lies and false provocations. The last time the world witnessed such an event was Jan. 6, 2021, when the foundations of American democracy were rattled by the actions of extremists responding to one man's ego-driven fiction.

One of Putin's longtime cheerleaders, former President Donald Trump, asserted Tuesday that the Ukraine crisis is the result of Biden administration weakness. Putin "would have never done during the Trump Administration what he is doing now, no way!" Trump wrote. Putin didn't need to because Trump already was doing Russia's bidding. Trump weakened NATO and publicly sided with Putin when U.S. intelligence assessments said Russia meddled in the 2016 election. It was Trump who withheld badly needed U.S. military aid from Ukraine while extorting its president to help to dig up dirt that would undermine Biden's election campaign.

Putin also enjoys the support of Fox News cheerleaders like Tucker Carlson, who is openly supporting Russia over Ukraine. Then there's Missouri's junior senator, Josh Hawley, who seems to think Russia attacking Ukraine isn't such a big deal. And Biden is the weak one?

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The first treatment for Alzheimer's taught us some hard lessons

By KEITH VOSSEL
Los Angeles Times

Keith Vossel is the director of the Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research at UCLA.

The Food and Drug Administration's surprise approval of Aduhelm for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease last year was a mess on practically every level. Three agency advisers resigned, and skeptical doctors such as myself were left to advise patients—all desperate for hope—that, yes, it is a treatment option but, no, we have no idea whether it will work.

And by the way, it is extraordinarily expensive.

This is not where you want to be when dealing with this mysterious and relentless disease that takes a person's life only after stripping away memories and every other vestige of who we are as individuals.

But this seemingly rash act by the FDA, followed by a sudden retreat by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services last month to cover Aduhelm's use only in clinical trials, may end up having an unforeseen and long-lasting benefit. Because this was the first drug ever prescribed to fight the progression of Alzheimer's, it revealed just how much work the medical community still needs to do to prepare itself to treat Alzheimer's patients, not just study them.

We need to create a sprawling infrastructure—an entire medical culture, frankly—to accommodate and help the approximately 6 million Americans with Alzheimer's. And we had better do it fast, because several promising drugs are wending their way through the approval process.

Just as COVID-19 showed us how society was not ready for a pandemic, but prepared us for the next one, so too has Aduhelm shown us what needs to be done to prepare for the next Alzheimer's drug. It was, in a sense, a trial run.

What did we learn? We don't have enough clinicians who specialize in Alzheimer's or doctors with neurological expertise. We don't have panels to determine treatment options, such as hospital multispecialty boards do for cancer patients. We don't have enough infusion centers to give patients these drugs, which like Aduhelm will most likely have to be delivered intravenously. We don't have transportation systems to get patients without means to these centers regularly.

We are not ready. But we've got to be.

Aduhelm was never promised to be a cure. Rather, the drug is designed to halt and reverse the growth of sticky amyloid plaques in the brain that are thought by many to cause Alzheimer's debilitating effects. It seeks to flatten the curve of symptoms, to use a pandemic-era phrase.

How do you measure its success? When is the cost—just lowered to $28,000 a year, from $56,000—worth it? Who decides?

Aduhelm's approval sent us all scrambling. Those of us who'd been following its tortured journey—in 2019, for example, trials were stopped because it showed no signs of working—never imagined that we'd have to turn on a dime and get all the necessary components in place to get it prescribed to everyone who was eligible for it; at UCLA Health, this meant quite literally tens of thousands of people.

We had to pivot, as many other centers did, from an academic practice to a community practice practically overnight. This was especially challenging because many primary care doctors are not qualified to treat these patients and this infinitely complex malady.

Because there has never been any treatment for this disease, the doctors in the field today came to do research. With the approval of Aduhelm, a lot of lab scientists found themselves preparing to do a lot more clinical work than they signed up for. We need to start a pipeline of qualified Alzheimer's clinicians now, because more treatments are coming.

The new drugs on the horizon are also designed to slow the spread of amyloid plaques. They are donanemab from Eli Lilly, lecanemab from Eisai/Biogen and gantenerumab from Roche/Genentech.

Eisai/Biogen has already applied for a marketing license, citing data from its Phase II trial that show strong plaque reduction. The other two companies are expected to follow suit soon. Although in the early stages of trials, one or more of these drugs may well prove more effective than Aduhelm, also known as aducanumab.

Of course, research must continue. These drugs don't pretend to be cures with the ability to undo damage. We will still need all the lab scientists and dedicated medical researchers we can get to

See ALZHEIMER'S on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The 4-H Marianas empowers CNMI youth to become leaders in the community

TOGETHER, WE CAN

By ROBERT JR. SUZUKI
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Robert Jr. Suzuki is the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services' extension agent under the Family, Community, and Youth Development Programs where he works with families, the youth, and community across the CNMI to strengthen their skill-sets to be productive members of our society. He passionately promotes positive youth development throughout the Marianas.

Since the 4-H Marianas was established in 2015, it has served more than 20,000 youth on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. When I got involved with 4-H at a young age, I didn't realize how much I would benefit from learning about leadership, agriculture, and community engagement. I learned through this organization how to be an advocate for positive youth development. 4-H continues to give youth around the world opportunities to engage with one another and enhance their skills to be better versions of themselves, or to reach their fullest potential as our mission states. My experience as a 4-H member has shown me that bridging the gap between our youth and the community across the islands allows for new experiences and eye-opening realms of new possibilities.

The 4-H organization is a U.S.-wide organization that was established in 1902. The 4-H Marianas is a youth-led nonprofit organization. It comprises a 4-H Marianas Youth State Council that is run by a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and senators. Each island has representatives for each position. In addition to the youth leadership, 4-H Marianas has an overall board of directors. The board of directors also has representatives from the respective islands that serve in advisory and mentorship roles for the youth. The Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services Family, Community, and Youth Development Program, made up of employees of the Northern Marianas College, also plays an active role as 4-H advisers and mentors.

4-H members volunteer their time and efforts to help the community. The Teen Leaders Club is a program in which members commit to two years of community outreach. In the first project year, the teens work on a research project guided by advisors and peer mentors from the previous cohort to address issues that affect the youth community. In their second year, they serve as peer mentors to the next group of 4-H Teen Leaders. There are currently five groups that are made up of youth from all three islands. One group is working on a project on plastic pollution in the schools. The members surveyed 300+ of their peers across the islands to ask information about the use of plastic from their school breakfast and lunches. They also asked how they think would be the best way to switch to more environmentally friendly options.

The 4-H Marianas' most anticipated project is the annual 4-H Camp Maga'lahi, a project that started in 2015 on Saipan. Due to its success, the camp expanded to Rota and Tinian in 2020. Partners such as the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance, the Bureau of Environment and Coastal Quality, and 500 sails, to name a few, participate by showcasing exhibits or hosting hands-on activities to allow campers to engage and explore their interests. The camp has welcomed more than 600 youth in the last seven years.

4-H Marianas is always looking for new partnerships that can educate our youth and provide greater opportunities to enhance their skills. I recently met with the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers team to talk about how we can engage our youth in their community projects. For almost five months now, GCEA introduced the importance of Marianas Village Pride and developed programs aimed to improve the quality of life for residents at the village level. You may have seen GCEA's partners in the community rehabilitating medians to improve safety around the islands for motorists and pedestrians. Because of our network in the islands, we were able to identify sidewalks, bus stops, and medians on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan that will allow our members to join GCEA's efforts.

I encourage youth on all islands to join 4-H Marianas. 4-H Marianas is open to all youth across the CNMI and is free to all who joins! Come as you are, meet new people, and learn new skills that will provide better opportunities in life. Serving your community and becoming a productive member of society are great ways to show your Marianas pride. You'd be amazed at how your valuable contributions today can make the Marianas a better place to live for future generations.

Together, We Can!

For more information, visit the GCEA at cnmieconomy.com, on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy), or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

Vladimir Putin has no time for your reality

By ANDREAS KLUTH
Bloomberg Opinion

Andreas Kluth is a columnist for Bloomberg Opinion*. He was previously editor in chief of Handelsblatt Global and a writer for the Economist. He's the author of* Hannibal and Me.

So it has begun. Russian President Vladimir Putin, by recognizing two separatist regions of Ukraine as independent states and sending in Russian soldiers as "peacekeepers," has made the overture for what could become war. What's on the man's mind? How does he see the world? Analysts and pundits everywhere have been wondering. The possibilities are frightening.

There was a time, in the early years of his reign, when Putin still surrounded himself with advisers and experts who gave him diverse views and interpretations of the world, a time when he spoke to foreign leaders and actually listened to them. By all appearances, he was in touch with reality.

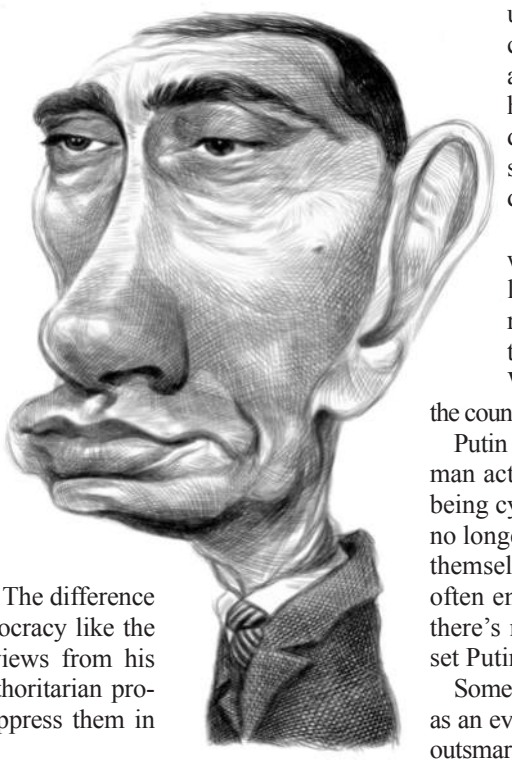
But at some point—more than a decade ago—Putin began constructing an alternate reality. He became a hobby historian and made up his own theories about the past, eliding facts willy-nilly to tell himself stories he liked. In one of these, Ukraine is not a proper country, just a part of a greater Russia—his Russia. In 2014, he began seizing parts of it.

Around that time, Angela Merkel, then German chancellor, had many conversations with him. She's a fluent Russian speaker and is said to be the world leader who understands Putin best. After one call, she turned to her aides and said she was "not sure he was in touch with reality," that he seemed to live "in another world."

Eight years on and Putin has, by all appearances, journeyed further into his own metaverse. As the political scientists Adam Casey and Seva Gunitsky describe in Foreign Affairs, that's because the Russian president, like most strongmen, has created an information bubble from which he can no longer escape.

Obsessed with secrecy, he doesn't even use a cellphone. He's shrunk his circle of advisers to just a few minions, chosen for loyalty or sycophancy rather than competence. They come disproportionately from the so-called siloviki, the top brass of the army and services like the FSB, the successor to the KGB that was Putin's own alma mater.

These yes-men (most are men) mirror back to Putin his paranoia about an allegedly aggressive "West." They feed his hawkish ego and withhold information about risks, making him feel more in control of events than he is. In effect, Putin has built a machine for confirmation bias. The pandemic has made all this worse. It's turned Putin into a germaphobe, who lets hardly anybody near him, and then only at shouting distance.



Putin is far from unique in succumbing to this interplay of seclusion and delusion. Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely, the British historian Lord Acton famously observed. He could have added that power also isolates, and distorts reality as a result. It has happened to every tyrant from Nero to Saddam Hussein, and uncountable corporate honchos and other kingpins, poobahs and bigwigs.

Nor is the affliction necessarily a peculiarity of autocracies. Former U.S. President Donald Trump has at times behaved as though he were emulating Putin in style, and approaches truth and facts with similar legerdemain. The difference is that a Trump, living in a vibrant democracy like the U.S., can only banish countervailing views from his own circle. A Putin, in charge of an authoritarian propaganda and security apparatus, can suppress them in nearly all of public life.

And so we get scenes like this week's, which look satirical until you realize they're historic. First Putin, behind a gilded desk, convenes his so-called Security Council in a rotunda fringed by faux-Corinthian columns. He seats the cronies on simple chairs at a great distance, leaving them to writhe awkwardly and anxiously. Some stammer incoherently. Putin orders them to be clear, then prompts them to utter the correct words. When one accidentally supports annexing Donetsk and Luhansk, Putin reminds him that he's just deciding on their independence for now. A Suetonius, Shakespeare or Orwell could not write a more devastating script.

Next, Putin takes to the airwaves with another rambling amateur history lecture that leaves the outside world rolling its eyes. Ukraine was an invention of Lenin, and is now a pawn of the West? There's a genocide of Russians in the country's east? Seriously.

Putin watchers often speculate whether the man actually believes this humbug or is just being cynical. At some point, that distinction no longer matters, because when people hear themselves or others repeating something often enough, they deem it true. Either way, there's nobody around him who can or will set Putin straight.

Some Western pundits seem to regard Putin as an evil genius, a tactical mastermind who'll outsmart us all. Maybe. But it seems more plausible that Putin is just an ordinary human being who's been alone in his echo chamber too long to hear any sounds from the outside—a man who's been wearing the goggles of power until he can no longer see anything but his virtual reality. This makes Putin more dangerous, not less.

ALZHEIMER'S

From Page 8

find ways, finally, to prevent and reverse the disease.

In the early days of COVID-19, hospitals were caught without enough protective gear, enough ICU beds and enough ventilators. Everyone was running on instinct. By the time omicron came around, hospitals were far better prepared and knew what to do. This is one reason that there were far fewer deaths with this latest surge of infections.

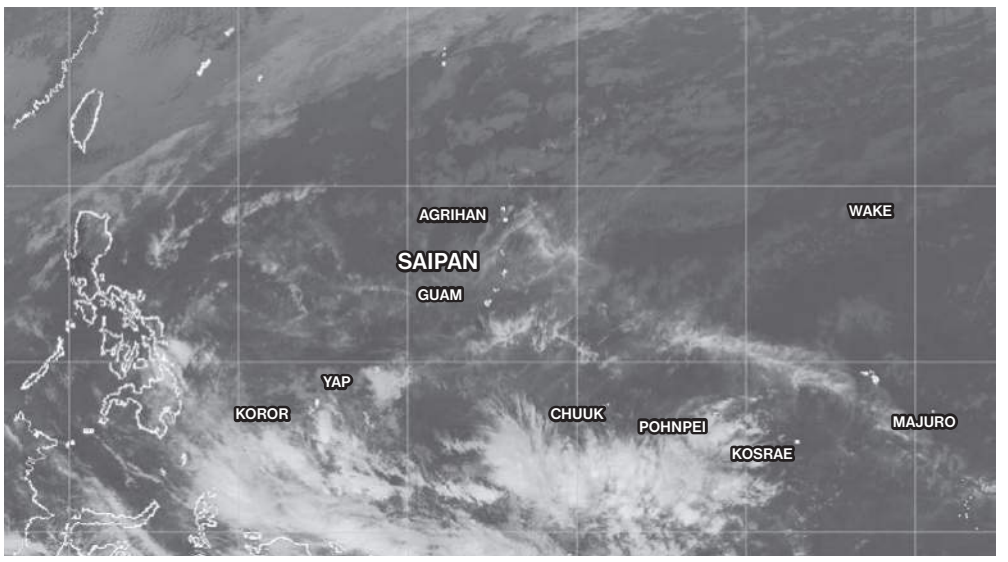
Same goes for Aduhelm and the lessons we learned. We aren't ready yet, but thanks to this trial run, we now know what we have to do to get ready.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Breezy. Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
86º 77º	86º 70	85º 76º	86º 75º	85º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:44 AM, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY. 24, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery and radar shows mostly cloudy skies and scattered showers across Saipan and Tinian, and spotty showers over Guam and Rota. This is supported by the ASOS at Saipan`s airport reporting rain more frequently than the ASOS located at Guam`s continue to prevail across the Marianas. Ritidian buoy is reporting seas 10 to 12 feet, while Ipan has seas between 8 to 9 feet. The closest altimetry pass shows combined seas between 10 to 12 feet to the west of the Marianas.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	29 / 25 °F
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Yap	Partly Cloudy	30 / 26 °F
Chuuk	Isolated Thunderstorms	29 / 27 °F
Pohnpei	Isolated Thunderstorms	30 / 26 °F
Kosrae	PM Thunderstorms	30 / 27 °F
Majuro	AM Showers	29 / 27 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:36 AM	18:23 PM
Saturday	06:36 AM	18:23 PM
Sunday	06:35 AM	18:24 PM
Monday	06:35 AM	18:24 PM
Tuesday	06:35 AM	18:24 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	01:22	12:51 PM	-
Saturday	02:26	13:51 PM	-
Sunday	03:29	14:55 PM	-
Monday	04:28	15:59 PM	-
Tuesday	04:28	15:59 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	25 / 16 °F
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	14 / 0 °F
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	17 / 15 °F
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	28 / 21 °F
London	Mostly Sunny	11 / 3 °F
Los Angeles	Sunny	19 / 6 °F
Manila	Mostly Sunny	33 / 25 °F
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	23 / 17 °F
Miami	Partly Cloudy	26 / 22 °F
New York	AM Rain	5 / 5 °F
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	9 / 1 °F
Paris	Mostly Sunny	12 / 0 °F
Busan	Sunny	12 / 2 °F
Rome	Partly Cloudy	16 / 6 °F
Salem	Partly Cloudy	24 / 16 °F
San Francisco	Sunny	14 / 4 °F
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	10 / 1 °F
Tokyo	Sunny	2 / 1°F
Washington, DC	AM Rain	13 / 2 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
03:57 AM	High Tide	1.45
08:20 AM	Low Tide	1.21
1:28 PM	High Tide	1.68
9:30 PM	Low Tide	-0.26

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1, 3, 5
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	4, 7
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA116	8:00am	8:46am	7
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2, 4, 7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/116	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 7 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	8:46am+1	6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9307	9:00AM	Q2:30PM	4, 7
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

NMC graduate Peachy Quitugua earns masters, is certified as a nurse-midwife

Northern Marianas College nursing graduate Peachy Quitugua recently earned a master of science in Nursing degree from the University of Cincinnati and also earned her national certification in Nurse Midwifery from the American Midwifery Certification Board or AMCB.

"It feels very surreal that I completed my masters and Nurse Midwifery program," Quitugua said. "I set a plan for myself when I decided to start this program and told myself that no matter the obstacle I was doing this for myself and to contribute to the healthcare community of the CNMI."

A former Miss Marianas, Quitugua earned an associate of science in Nursing from NMC in 2016, and her bachelor of science in Nursing from UC in 2018. Quitugua completed her masters program last December, and passed her nurse-midwife certification on Feb. 8 of this year.

According to Quitugua, she wanted to pursue further education in the field of nursing as she felt that she needed to grow more in her career. She was inspired to do more in her field, and to be able to care for her community.

SAMANTHA SALAMON
Peachy Quitugua

"I started this journey to become a Certified Nurse Midwife as a way to educate, empower, and care for the women in my community," Quitugua said.

"There are many barriers to good health and becoming a midwife is my first step to decreasing health disparities among women and their children of diverse backgrounds. I want to be able to make midwifery care accessible to all. I hope to start as a Certified Nurse-Midwife at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and contribute to our community first and foremost," Quitugua added.

NMC Nursing Department chair Rosa Aldan said she was proud and thrilled to hear the phenomenal news about her former student's latest accomplishments.

"We are very proud of Peachy for this amazing accomplishment and cannot wait to see her make an impact in nursing and women's health," Aldan said.

Upon graduation from NMC and after passing the NCLEX-RN, Quitugua worked as a labor and delivery nurse at the CHCC. She hopes she can now work at both the Women's Clinic and the Labor and Delivery department of CHCC, and to also provide birth and breastfeeding classes.

Quitugua also launched a health and wellness Instagram page (@midwifeinparadise) for women who are seeking guidance in gynecological care, pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.

For other aspiring nurses such as herself, Quitugua's advice to them is to believe in themselves.

"Get a mentor who can guide you through your career path and seek out opportunities that would benefit your future practice," Quitugua said. "Working toward a goal that you are passionate about will not seem like 'work,' instead you will look forward to it each day." ***(NMC)***

CNMI DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division is preparing to conduct the CNMI 2022 Prevailing Wage Study (PWS) survey to begin on March 01, 2022 and notifies all businesses and employers in the CNMI to log on to the CSD Data Collection Portal and complete the PWS survey questionnaire.

All businesses and employers, with and with no employees, are urged to complete this survey before March 15, 2022.

Data Collection Portal Link:
http://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp/

STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

P.O. Box 10007 | Saipan, MP 96950 | Phone: (670) 664-1712 | Email: cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp

VISION: *"To integrate a seamless workforce development system that meets the needs of employers, job-seekers, workers, and youths in order to supply quality employees for the dynamic economy of the CNMI."*

PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI's State Workforce Development Board in collaboration with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core program partners (DOL Workforce Investment Agency, NMC Adult Education State Office, and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation) will be modifying portions of the CNMI's Unified State Plan for Program Years 2022-2023.

Proposed modifications to the plan include:

- A description of current economic, workforce, and workforce development activities impact analyses of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- State strategic goals to achieve the vision of the CNMI "To integrate a seamless workforce development system that meets the needs of employers, job-seekers, workers, and youths in order to supply quality employees for the dynamic economy of the CNMI."
- Performance goals for Program Year 2022 and 2023.
- Update the State Operating Systems for the SWDB and the core programs.

The public is invited to provide input or comments on the proposed changes during a thirty (30) day public comment period beginning February 10, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2022.

There will be public forums on Wednesday, March 02, 2022 and Tuesday, March 08, 2022 for in-person and virtual attendance.

Tinian:
Date: Wednesday, March 02, 2022
Time: 5:30pm – 7:30pm
Venue: JC Café

Rota:
Date: Tuesday, March 08, 2022
Time: 5:30pm – 7:30pm
Venue: Tiana's Café

Space is limited and on a first-come basis for in-person attendance. Virtual participation is available by request. Please RSVP to cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp, cnmiwioa@dol.gov.mp, or calling 670-664-1708/1704/1713.

A copy of the CNMI 2020-2023 Unified State Plan may be found on www.marianaslabor.net or www.ovrgov.net.

Please submit all comments in writing to cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp, lorraine.maui@marianas.edu, or arlene@ovrgov.net with the subject line CNMI State Plan 2022. The deadline for comment submission is Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 4:30pm.

/s/ Velma Palacios
Chairperson

Date: February 10, 2022

This announcement is paid in full through a grant by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration.

MISSION: *Empowering, integrating, implementing, and innovating the workforce needs of the CNMI."*

Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting

March 9, 2022 | 5:00 PM
Fiesta Hall, Grandvrio Resort, Saipan
Tel: 234-9661/2 • Fax: 234-9666
www.cnmizoning.com

AGENDA

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of 03/09/2022 Agenda
4. Adoption of 12/29/2021 and 01/19/2022 Zoning Board Meeting minutes.
5. Public Comments (not for items to be discussed in item B. Public Hearings)

B. Public Hearings:

1. Conditional Use Application #2020-11154 – Blue Spot Corp. is proposing to occupy an existing structure to designate three (3) service areas for regular vehicles and three **(3)** service areas for backhoes for its "Vehicle Repair General" Use. This use is permitted in the district as a conditional use. The site is located on Lot No. 550-8-R1 in the village of Afetna. This area is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

2. Conditional Use Application #2020-11127 – Blue Spot Corp. is proposing to stage and occupy a Cargo Container measuring **40'** for its Office Use and a portion measuring **19'.8" (L) x 8' (W)** will be utilized for its "Institutional Residential" Use. This use is permitted in the district as a conditional use. The site is located on Lot No. 550-8-R1 in the village of Afetna. This area is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

3. Conditional Use Application #2020-11126 – Max Investments, LLC is proposing to utilize an existing structure measuring **20'(L) x 20'(W)** to convert it into a Dry Shed for its "Cannabis Farm" Use. This use is permitted in the area as a conditional use. The site is located on Lot No. 502 New-3-5 in the village of As Lito. This area is zoned as Rural.

4. Conditional Use Application #2020-11146 – CannaBlyss Inc. is proposing to utilize an existing structure measuring **25'.1" (L) x 20'.11" (W)** for its "Cannabis Retail" Use. This use is permitted in the area as a conditional use. The site is located on Lot. No. 001-D-07 in the village of Garapan. This area is zoned as Garapan Core.

C. Old Business
1. Saipan Cares for Animals – Conditional Use Application No. 2020-8063
   i. Request to amend approved plans
2. Triple Star International Corp. – Conditional Use Application No. 2020-9931
3. AK Toyota Lexus Saipan – Conditional Use Application No. 2020-10382
   i. Submission of supplemental information

D. Executive Session

E. Miscellaneous
1. Administrator's Updates
2. Permit & Enforcement Report

F. Adjournment

In an effort to provide public access to this meeting during this pandemic, the Commonwealth Zoning Board will host this meeting via:

Zoom Video Communications
Meeting Link: https://zoom.us/j/6853007492
Meeting Code: 685 300 7492

JAMES MACARANAS, FACILITIES MANAGER- SPEARHEADING ISLANDWIDE BEAUTIFICATION

Island Tourist Attraction Beautification

Island Tourist Attraction Beautification

Daycare Association Christmas Village

Daycare Association Christmas Village

Kagman High School Visits Museum Feb. 2022

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
MUSEUM
OF HISTORY & CULTURE

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Hafa Adai and Tirow! The Covid-19 pandemic has caused enormous challenges in how we live and how we conduct our operations. The increased positivity rates in the CNMI has made the museum take precautionary steps through daily disinfecting of artifacts, exhibits and disinfecting our entire facility including the floors, walls and ceilings. The NMI Museum is also equipped with HEPA Air Purifiers and Covid-19 disinfectant sprays from Reach Solutions that kills 99.99% of Covid-19 viruses and other harmful bacteria.

One of the biggest challenges, has been maintaining the 96-year-old historical building and the preservation of the priceless artifacts it holds. Emergency repairs have been ongoing to avoid injuries to our guests and staff. Recent discovery of cracks on our ceilings, and walls in the main museum gallery were immediately repaired. The guest's restrooms also displayed spalling (rebar expansion) on the ceiling, walls and cracks on the wall tiles.

The NMI Museum continues building and sustaining capacity. The museum diversified its services by conducting its first outreach program (Traveling Museum) spearheaded by Mr. Archie Ajoste. Mr. Ajoste, the museums certified "docent" or museum tour guide is responsible for conducting a brief historical presentation and education of selected artifacts at the various elementary and high schools.

The Traveling Museum outreach has been very successful and getting lots of requests by the various schools. In the future, we will be asking the SNIL delegation for funding for the purchase of a van to utilize transporting the artifacts to the various schools. I want to personally thank Speaker Edmund Villagomez who recently paid for Tasi Tours busing service and made it possible for Kagman High School students to visit the NMI Museum.

Moving forward, you can expect more activities at the NMI Museum. We ask for your patience as we continue to improve and modernize our facility.

Thank you,

Danny Aquino
Executive Director

Outreach On Schools

ARCHIE AJOSTE, CERTIFIED DOCENT - SPEARHEADING OUTREACH

Outreach On Schools

Outreach On Schools

Museum Interior - Before

Museum Interior - After

Gift Shop - Before

Gift Shop Renovation

Gift Shop Renovation

Gift Shop - Before

RENOVATIONS

Museum Interior - Before

Museum Interior - After

Museum Interior - After

Museum Interior - After

Guest Restrooms - After

Guest Restrooms - After

Guest Restrooms - Before

Hallway Of Office & Staff Entrance - Before

Staff Restrooms - Before

Outdoor Events

Outdoor Events

Valentines Paint Night By Ms. Linda Torres - February 2022

Business

Get to know the 2022 TRD Toyota Tundra

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-two years since its initial launch, the 2022 edition of the TRD Toyota Tundra will amaze you.

"Redesigned" is the key word to describe this new Tundra and is it is ready to meet and even exceed the toughest expectations of many from a big truck. From its sleek body features and engine, added power for off-road and towing capabilities, to its spacious and polished interior, the entire eye-popping package is capped with hi-tech responsive features that are attuned to any driver of today.

BEA CABRERA
The 2022 TRD Toyota Tundra is now available on Saipan.

According to Atkins Kroll Inc. sales manager Kevin Barnes, the Tundra is very competitive in the full-size truck category as it is the most reliable 4x4 truck over the years and all that were lacking in the previous Tundras have been addressed in the 2022 model.

"For the first couple of months, the TRD Toyota Tundra off-road package will be our standard package and we made sure that it is well-suited and equipped for everybody. There will be higher trim levels coming in the future and followed by a full-size Tundra hybrid shortly," he said

Like the Toyota Tacoma, the 2022 TRD Toyota Tundra is great for daily use and functionality. The Tundra is larger and made for people with specific needs—towing, bigger space and more power, he added.

One of the biggest changes to the 2022 Tundra is its engine. Instead of a V8, it now comes with a V6 twin turbo engine. Barnes said the V6 engine may be smaller in size than the V8, but it has the two twin turbo that optimizes efficiency and allows smooth air travel inside the engine, which gives it more horsepower.

"This V6 3.4liter twin turbo engine actually comes with 389 horsepower, which is very, very strong and it comes with 479 pounds of torque so it's an improvement over the larger V8 engine," he said.

This means the truck's towing ability has also gone up. From 10,000 lbs of towing capability before, now it's up to 12,000 lbs. "One can now tow pretty big boats, trailers, equipment etc. as this Tundra is built for that," he added.

This Tundra comes with what's called "towing mirrors," which is beneficial because they give you a wider view of the vehicle. It is also auto-folding, so when you turn the car off, it will automatically fold in and when you turn the engine on, it will automatically fold out.

"If you are towing say a boat or trailer that is a little bit longer than usual, these towing mirrors will give a longer field view and, of course, with the LED lights, your surrounding will illuminate," Barnes said. ***(See 'Overdrive' section of Tuesday's Saipan Tribune for more details)***

For more information, visit Atkins Kroll Inc. along Chalan Monsignor Guerrero Oleai from 8am to 5pm Monday to Saturday or call the sales department at (670) 234-5911.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Office of Procurement
Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165, Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 236-9791 | Email: procurement@nmijudiciary.com

FERMIN B. DELA CRUZ
Procurement Officer

FEBRUARY 25, 2022

INVITATION FOR BIDS
NO. ITB-2022-JUD-8
VSS Bid No. 42200029

"VEHICLE PURCHASE FOR MARSHALS SERVICE DIVISION"

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 25, 2022 (ChST)
SUBMIT VIA: THE CNMI GOVERNMENT'S VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

The Northern Mariana Islands Judiciary ("Judiciary") is accepting bids from qualified vendors for the purchase and delivery of one (1) Police package SUV (white or black) for the Marshals Service Division as described in the scope of work.

This project is supported, in whole or in part, by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, CNMI award number CNMI22004, awarded to the CNMI Judiciary by the CNMI Department of Finance.

A copy of the Invitation for Bids Package ("Package") is available on the CNMI Government's new Vendor portal, Vendor Self Service ("VSS"), at https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/default.aspx. The package may also be retrieved online at www.nmijudiciary.com. You must register on the VSS to participate in this ITB. For registration instructions, please follow the link: https://www.finance.gov.mp/division-forms/oit/cnmi-vss-registration-instructions.pdf.

The Judiciary reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or portions thereof, and waive immaterial defects if to do so would be in the best interest of the CNMI government.

The provisions of the NMI Judiciary Rules of Procurement Rule 69 prohibiting gratuities, kickbacks and contingent fees shall apply.

/s/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
CHIEF JUSTICE

/s/FERMIN B. DELA CRUZ
PROCUREMENT OFFICER

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
P.O. BOX 500861 CK
SAIPAN, MP 96950
TEL: (670) 664-3200/1
FAX: (670) 664-3237
info@mymarianas.com
www.mymarianas.com

REGULAR BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority hereby gives notice that a **Regular Board of Directors Meeting** will be held on **February 28, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.** at the MVA Conference Room, Saipan, MP, 96950.

MEETING AGENDA

1) **Preliminary Matters**
   a. Call to Order
   b. Roll Call
   c. Adoption of Agenda
   d. Adoption of Minutes
      i. Special Board Meeting Minutes – December 17, 2021
      ii. Special Board Meeting Minutes – December 20, 2021
      iii. Special Board Meeting Minutes – December 27, 2021
2) **Public Comments**
3) **Committee Reports**
   a. Finance Committee
      i. Fund Status Report
         1. Reprogramming of Funds
            a. Taste of the Marianas
      ii. FY2020 Independent Audit Report
   b. CNMI Tourism Resumption Investment Plan (TRIP)
      i. CNMI TRIP – Korea
      ii. Safe Travels Marianas
4) **Old Business**
   a. Change Order: MVA Korea – TAMS Inc.
5) **New Business**
   a. FY2023 Budget
   b. Memorandum of Agreement
      i. Carolinians Affairs Office – Refaluwasch Advisory Council
6) **Executive Session**
7) **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
8) **Adjournment**

/s/ Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY(CPA)
CNMI GOVERNMENT

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 • Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) is inviting qualified contractors to submit their qualifications and bid proposals for the FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER RENOVATION PROJECT, SAIPAN, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-004-17.

Bidders are to submit one original and two copies of their bid which shall be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Air Traffic Control Tower Renovation Project for the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan, CNMI, Project No. CPA-SA-004-17" and submitted no later than 2:00 PM, MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2022, to the Office of the Executive Director, CPA Administration, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport at which time and place the sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read. Bidders are requested to minimize their company's attendees to ensure social distancing, as well as wear a face mask at all times while at the airport.

The Project, in general, consists of, but is not limited, repairs and improvements to the Air Traffic Control Tower inclusive of restrooms, kitchens, ceiling, flooring, walls, cab and catwalk, diagonal bracings, antenna supports, air conditioning, ventilation, plumbing, fire, jockey pump systems, electrical equipment and other miscellaneous work on non-damaged components necessary for required repair of damaged components, all in accordance with the Project Drawings and Specifications.

The Project is being financed by funds from the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The contract award, if it is to be made, will be made within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the receipt of bids. CPA reserves the right to hold such bids in effect for one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the date of bid opening.

The contract period for construction of the project in its entirety shall be FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY (420) calendar days.

Liquidated damages in the amount of ONE THOUSAND ($1,000.00) Dollars shall be assessed the Contractor for each calendar day that the completion of the Project is delayed beyond the contract completion date without approved excuse.

A DVD containing the Contract Documents including plans and specifications, may be obtained at the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd floor of the Departure Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, upon the payment of TWO HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS (US $250.00) for each set of plans and documents in electronic form (DVD). The payment is nonrefundable. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, cashier's check or U.S. postal money order payable to the "Commonwealth Ports Authority".

A pre-bid conference will be held at the ARFF Classroom at the Saipan Airport Fire Station, at 10:00 AM, FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2022, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. A site visit will follow the pre-bid conference. The pre-bid and site visit are not mandatory. However, it is the bidders' responsibility to familiarize themselves with the project location and conditions. Bidders are requested to minimize their company's attendees to ensure social distancing, as well as face wear a mask at all times while at the airport.

Bidders attention is called to the fact that this is a renovation project, and the bid is to be lump sum inclusive of all work described in the contract documents including all labor, equipment, materials (including excess waste materials), necessary fittings and accessories. Lump sum work shall include all work on existing concealed elements referenced by the contract documents or required for completion of any other elements specifically refereced in the contract documents.

Questions should be submitted to the CPA Executive Director at the CPA Administration Office, in writing, at least fourteen (14) days prior to the bid opening date.

Each bid proposal shall be on a form furnished by the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The bidders shall use the bid schedule form available on the DVD. Each bidder must also supply all information required by the bid proposal documents and specifications.

Each bid shall be accompanied by either a bid bond by a U.S. Treasury listed surety company, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the bid price. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

By submitting a bid/proposal under this solicitation, the bidder or offeror certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred or suspended by any Federal department or agency from participation in this transaction.

The apparent low bidder will be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and personnel, bonding and insurance. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be "responsive or responsible", their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

All mechanics and laborers for this procurement project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by the CNMI or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. A copy of the Department of the Federal Labor Wage Rate Determination is included in Section GP 70-27 of the specifications. The bidder shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract and include associated costs in the bid proposal. The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the specifications, and bid proposal documents are available for inspection at the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 USC §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders or offerors that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The United States Secretary of Transportation has granted the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands an exemption from the requirements of the Department of Transportation's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) regulation, which later became the Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, as it relates to FAA grant programs. The Secretary of Transportation has not determined that a portion of those requirements should be reinstated.

In addition to the above, all bidders shall comply with all other Federal requirements under this procurement, including but not limited to Buy American Preference, Foreign Trade Restriction, Davis Bacon, Veteran's Preference, Affirmative Action and Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-free Workplace. Further details on all Federal requirements are provided in the specifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the bid schedule or misenter of the quantity of line item; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: February 24, 2022

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

US vaccination drive is bottoming out as omicron subsides

HAMILTON, Ala. (AP)—A handwritten log kept by nurses tells the story of the losing battle to get more people vaccinated against COVID-19 in this corner of Alabama: Just 14 people showed up at the Marion County Health Department for their initial shot during the first six weeks of the year. That was true even as hospitals in and around the county of roughly 30,000 people filled with virus patients and the death toll climbed. On many days, no one got a first shot at all, while a Mexican restaurant up the street, Los Amigos, was full of unmasked diners at lunchtime. The vaccination drive in the U.S. is grinding to a halt, and demand has all but collapsed in places like this deeply conservative manufacturing town where many weren't interested in the shots to begin with. The average number of Americans getting their first shot is down to about 90,000 a day, the lowest point since the first few days of the U.S. vaccination campaign, in December 2020.

Study: Child poverty rising after tax credit expires

WASHINGTON (AP)—The number of children in America living in poverty jumped dramatically after just one month without the expanded child tax credit payments, according to a new study. Advocates fear the lapse in payments could unravel what they say were landmark achievements in poverty reduction. Columbia University's Center on Poverty and Social Policy estimates 3.7 million more children were living in poverty by January—a 41% increase from December, when families received their last check. The federal aid started last July but ended after President Joe Biden's Build Back Better bill stalled in the sharply divided Congress. Payments of up to $300 per child were delivered directly to bank accounts on the 15th of each month, and last week marked the second missed deposit of the year. The Columbia study, which combines annual U.S. Census data with information from the Census Bureau's monthly Current Population Survey bulletins, found that the monthly child poverty rate increased from 12.1% in December to 17% in January.

As climate change costs mount, Biden seeks to price damages

HARDIN, Mont. (AP)—In the coal fields of eastern Montana, climate change is forcing a stark choice: halt mining that helped build everything from schools to senior centers or risk astronomical future damage as fossil fuel emissions warm the planet and increase disasters, crop losses and premature deaths. One of the largest mines in this arid region straddling the Wyoming border is Spring Creek -- a gaping hole among sagebrush hills where house-sized mechanical shovels dig up millions of tons of coal annually, much of it shipped overseas and burned in Asian power plants. Spring Creek's hundreds of jobs help undergird the economy of the Crow Indian Reservation and nearby parts of Wyoming. In Big Horn County, encompassing most of the reservation, taxes and royalties from coal fund almost two-thirds of government services. It's one of the most coal-dependent communities in America.

Air Force officers sue over religious exemption denials

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP)—A dozen U.S. Air Force officers have filed a lawsuit against the federal government after the military denied their religious exemptions to the mandatory COVID-19 vaccine. The officers, mostly from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, along with a handful of airmen and reservists, accused the Air Force of using a double standard when approving the requests. The Air Force, according to the lawsuit filed last week, had allowed more than 3,000 medical and administrative exemptions but only nine religious exemptions. "The granting of more than one thousand medical and administrative exemptions belies any assertion that vaccination is mission-critical and that no exemptions can be granted," the lawsuit said.

Boy's body found in freezer; boyfriend of mother arrested

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A note that a Las Vegas schoolgirl gave her teacher saying her mother was being held captive and thought the girl's brother was dead led to the discovery of the boy's body in a garage freezer and the arrest of the mother's boyfriend on murder and kidnapping charges, authorities said Wednesday. Brandon Lee Toseland, 35, was arrested Tuesday after police saw him leave his house with the mother in a vehicle in which officers also found handcuffs, Las Vegas homicide Lt. Ray Spencer said. A lawyer speaking for the woman and her family told The Associated Press she endured months in physical, sexual and emotional control of a man who told her he would kill her children if she ever left him. More than 10 weeks after she last saw her son, she resorted to sending a message with her daughter to school. "There was never a time when her daughter was with her that she was not locked in a room, bound or handcuffed," attorney Stephen Stubbs said of the mother. "There was never an opportunity to take her daughter and run."

WANTED: GRAPHIC ARTIST

Hafa Adai! Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

is looking for a full-time graphic artist.

The ideal candidate must know how to use InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator; can work fast and is able to work in a deadline-oriented environment; must be quick to grasp instructions; and must be able to create ad designs, concepts, and layouts based on knowledge of layout principles and esthetic design concepts.

Supercharge your graphic design career by learning the ins and outs of newspaper publishing!

Email your application and résumé to Mia Carreon at mia_carreon@tanholdings.com or drop them off at the HR office on the second floor of the JP Center building in Garapan, Saipan.

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE

Procurement and Property Management
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Phone: (670) 234-5498 Ext. 6824 I www.marianas.edu

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS
NMCRQS 22-001

ARCHITECTURAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES
PLANNING, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES PROJECT

Northern Marianas College (The College) is soliciting for interested firms "Qualification Statements" for Architectural/Engineering Services for the Center for Research Extension and Development project.

The request for "Statement of Qualification (RQS)" packets are available at NMC, Procurement Office commencing 10:00am Friday, February 25, 2022 or Electronic packet email request to anita.camacho@marianas.edu.

Pre-submittal conference is schedule for 09:00am-10:00am, March 07, 2022 CNMI Via Zoom.

Attendance is not mandatory but is strongly recommended.

Qualification Statements Submissions
Due date and time: 10:00am, March 28, 2022 (CNMI)
Procurement & Property Management Office, Bldg. P, As Terlaje Campus

Paid for by 100% federal funds through the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant.

This Request for Statement of Qualification under Article 7, "Local Business Preference" as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The College reserves the right to reject any and/or all Qualification Statements for any reason and waive any defect in said Qualification Statements, or cancel in part or its entirety this Request for Qualification Statements, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

Approved by:

/s/ Anita Camacho
Procurement & Property Manager

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950
Gualo Rai Center, Saipan, TEL. NO. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION
As of February 25, 2022

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Blue Ocean Tinian Corporation	11/29/2021 TLRm-2022-003	Commercial Scuba Diving Operation	Tinian	Marine Sports	Approved* 02/11/2022
2. Resources Management International Corporation	01/28/2022 SMS-2022-015	Rock Crushing & Rock Quarry Operations	As Matuis, Saipan	Major Siting	Under Review*
3. Fang Wang	02/03/2022 SW-2021-047-A1	Construction of Concrete Driveway & Water Tank	Susupe, & Mangrove	Wetlands Saipan	Approved 02/14/2022
4. Thanks Saipan Corporation	02/14/2022 SPIm-2022-017	Drydock-MV Ocean Star	Lowerbase, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Approved* 02/23/2022
5. Marianas Visitors Authority	02/15/2022 TPIm-2022-004	Temporary Toilets & Showers for Campers	San Jose, Tinian	Ports & Industrial	Under Review*
6. Commonwealth Utilities Corporation	02/18/2022 SSCH-2022-018	Construction & Installation of 2" Waterline (Dotse Place)	Gualo Rai, Saipan	Shoreline, Coastal Hazards	Under Review*
7. Saipan Crewboats, Inc	02/24/2022 SPIm-2022-019	Drydock of C/B Patriot	Lowerbase, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Under Review*

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

Asia

Japan, China spar over Japan diplomat's detention in Beijing

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's Foreign Ministry said Wednesday it has lodged a strong protest and demanded an apology after its diplomat was detained and questioned by authorities in Beijing.

The diplomat from the Japanese Embassy was seized while on duty and held for several hours on Monday, the Foreign Ministry said.

The diplomat was carrying out his legitimate work and the detention violated the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which stipulates the immunity of diplomats from civil and criminal jurisdiction of the host nation, the ministry said.

The diplomat, whose name and other details were not disclosed, was released later Monday, a ministry official said on condition of anonymity, citing protocol. There was no sign the diplomat was physically abused while he was being interrogated, the official said.

AP

Men on bicycles go past the Japanese Embassy in Beijing, China, on Sept. 30, 2015.

Vice Foreign Minister Takeshi Mori on Tuesday summoned Yang Yu, charge d'affaires and China's interim ambassador in Tokyo, demanding China offer an apology and avoid such situations in the future.

In Beijing on Wednesday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told reporters that "China has made a stern complaint with Japan, urging it to respect China's law, strictly restrain its consular staff in China and prevent such incidents from happening again."

She said the Japanese diplomat had engaged in activities "inconsistent with their capacity in China" and that the relevant Chinese departments conducted investigations and questioning "in accordance with the law and regulation." No other details were provided.

Last week, Japan's government said its national in his 50s had been detained in Shanghai since December over unspecified law violations, but gave no further details.

There have been several other cases of arrests in the past involving Japanese citizens who had businesses or connections with China over allegations including spying, but cases against diplomats or government officials are extremely rare.

In 2002, a Japanese defense attache was held by Chinese authorities for several hours.

China says US creating 'fear and panic' over Ukraine

BEIJING (AP)—China on Wednesday accused the U.S. of creating "fear and panic" over the crisis in Ukraine, and called for talks to reduce rapidly building tensions.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said China is opposed to new unilateral sanctions imposed on Russia, reiterating a long-standing Chinese position.

She said the U.S. was fueling tensions by providing defensive weapons to Ukraine, without mentioning Russia's deployment of as many as 190,000 troops on the Ukrainian border. Hua also did not mention efforts by the U.S., France and others to engage Russia diplomatically.

China-Russia ties have grown closer under Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin at talks in Beijing earlier this month. The two sides issued a joint statement backing Moscow's opposition to a NATO expansion in former Soviet republics and buttressing China's claim to the self-governing island of Taiwan.

"On the Ukraine issue, unlike the U.S., which keeps sending weapons to Ukraine, creating fear and panic and even playing up the threat of war, China has been calling on all parties to respect and pay attention to each other's legitimate security concerns, work together to solve problems through negotiations and consultations, and maintain regional peace and stability," Hua said at a daily briefing.

The outcome of the Ukraine crisis is seen as having ramifications for China over its threat to invade Taiwan, a close U.S. ally, and its border dispute with India and its claims in the South China and East China seas, where it has raised concerns over conflict with Japan, the Philippines and others.

Grumbling grows as Hong Kong sticks with zero-COVID policy

HONG KONG (AP)—Hong Kong residents are becoming increasingly annoyed with the administration's insistence on sticking to China's "zero-COVID" strategy as the city posted another record number of cases Wednesday, bristling at ever-stricter regulations and a plan to test everyone for the virus.

Schools have already switched to online learning and summer holidays are being moved forward so that the buildings can be used as facilities for testing, isolation and vaccination. Hong Kong says it will go ahead with the plan to test every one of its 7.5 million residents three times in March.

AP

Residents line up to get tested for the coronavirus at a temporary testing center in Hong Kong Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022.

Under the "zero-COVID-19" strategy, every person testing positive case must be quarantined in a hospital or other government facility for 14 days regardless of symptoms. It's in contrast with most countries, which are reducing restrictions and allowing people with mild or no symptoms to remain at home.

"The whole world knows we have to live with the virus, only the Hong Kong government does not know," said taxi driver Chan Tai-man. "Actually it's not that they don't know, they only do what the Chinese government tells them to."

With hospitals in Hong Kong already overwhelmed, construction crews from mainland China are being sent to build new isolation units and the city was moving to convert hotels, halls, indoor stadiums and other quarantine locations, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam said.

UN investigator calls for 60M vaccine doses for N. Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The United Nations' independent investigator on human rights in North Korea has called for the international community to provide 60 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to the isolated authoritarian nation, which has recently showed signs of easing one of the world's most restrictive pandemic border closures.

Quintana

Tomas Ojea Quintana said Wednesday the doses would be enough to inoculate North Korea's population of more than 25 million people at least twice. He said the shots would possibly encourage Pyongyang's leadership to open up more after the country's self-imposed lockdown of the past two years created challenges for outside monitors, aid groups and diplomats.

The move could be "the key to opening (North) Korea's border and resuming its interaction with the international community and bringing it out of isolation," Quintana said at a news conference on Wednesday in Seoul.

It's unclear whether Quintana's plan is feasible. The North has so far shunned millions of shots offered by the U.N.-backed COVAX distribution program, possibly because they come with international monitoring requirements. Quintana suggested promising North Korea 60 million doses up front because the country might be unwilling to receive limited volumes in phases.

North Korea in recent weeks has partially reopened railroad freight traffic with its ally China, in a move that appears to align with leader Kim Jong Un's call for a more "scientific" virus response.

The reopening shows North Korea is exploring more sustainable ways to deal with a virus threat that may last for years, and it could also provide a glimpse into the North's vaccine strategy following a year-long delay in its mass immunization program.

Experts say the North may seek China and Russia's help to provide regular testing and vaccinations for workers and troops in border areas, where access from other regions is tightly restricted.

World

Russia-Ukraine: What to know as explosions boom over Ukraine

By JIM HEINTZ, RAF CASERT and ELLEN KNICKMEYER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

A Ukrainian serviceman stands at his position at the line of separation between Ukraine-held territory and rebel-held territory near Svitlodarsk, eastern Ukraine, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022.

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Associated Press journalists in the cities of Odesa and Kharkiv were hearing explosions Thursday morning after Russian President Vladimir Putin defiantly announced he was launching a military operation in Ukraine. Putin is warning other countries that any attempt to interfere with the Russian action would "lead to the consequences you have never seen in history."

U.S. President Joe Biden says the world will "hold Russia accountable," and NATO's head called Russia's action a violation of international law and a threat to the security of Europe and its Atlantic allies.

The Ukrainian president earlier rejected Moscow's claims that his country poses a threat to Russia and made a passionate plea for peace.

Before Putin's announcement, world leaders worked to maintain a united stance and vowed to impose tougher sanctions in the event of a full-fledged invasion.

Putin's declaration came even as the U.N. Security Council was in an emergency meeting Wednesday night on the crisis, at Ukraine's request.

Here are the things to know about the conflict over Ukraine and the security crisis in Eastern Europe:

Putin makes his move

Putin said the military operation was needed to protect civilians in eastern Ukraine—a claim the U.S. had predicted he would falsely make to justify an invasion.

In a televised address aired before dawn Thursday Moscow time, Putin accused the U.S. and its allies of ignoring Russia's demands to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and offer Moscow security guarantees. He said Russia's goal was not to occupy Ukraine.

Putin urged Ukrainian servicemen to "immediately put down arms and go home." In a stark warning to other countries, Putin said: "I have a few words for those who could feel tempted to interfere with ongoing developments. Whoever tries to impede us, let alone create threats for our country and its people, must know that the Russian response will be immediate and lead to the consequences you have never seen in history."

Soon after, the AP heard explosions in the cities of Odesa and Kharkiv.

US, NATO react

Leaders of the United States and NATO quickly condemned Russia's attack as unprovoked and unjustified.

Putin "has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering," Biden said in a statement after Putin's announcement.

Biden promised united and decisive responses by the United States and its allies. "The world will hold Russia accountable," he said.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg called any Russian attack a violation of international law and a threat to the security of Europe and its partners.

"Despite our repeated warnings and tireless efforts to engage in diplomacy, Russia has chosen the path of aggression against a sovereign and independent country," the NATO leader said.

Ukraine's president makes plea for peace

Speaking in Russian, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy gave an emotional address early Thursday, before Putin announced the start of the offensive on Zelenskyy's country.

"The people of Ukraine and the government of Ukraine want peace," he said. "But if we come under attack, if we face an attempt to take away our country, our freedom, our lives and lives of our children, we will defend ourselves. When you attack us, you will see our faces, not our backs."

Zelenskyy said he asked for a call with Putin late Wednesday but the Kremlin didn't respond.

Earlier Wednesday, Ukraine imposed a nationwide state of emergency, which allows authorities to impose restrictions on movement, block rallies and ban political parties and organizations.

Putin's declaration overtakes emergency U.N. Security Council session

At an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council called by Ukraine because of the imminent threat of a Russian invasion, members still unaware of Putin's announcement of a military operation appealed to him to stop an attack.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres opened the meeting, and just before the announcement, he told Putin: "Stop your troops from attacking Ukraine. Give peace a chance. Too many people have already died."

Guterres later pleaded with Putin, "In the name of humanity, bring your troops back to Russia."

When will the West impose more sanctions?

Ukraine's forces are no match for Moscow's military might, so Kyiv is counting on other countries to hit Russia hard—with sanctions.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter that the West should target Putin where it hurts without delay. "Hit his economy and cronies. Hit more. Hit hard. Hit now," Kuleba wrote.

Biden on Wednesday allowed sanctions to move forward against the company that built the Russia-to-Germany Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline and against the company's CEO.

Biden waived sanctions last year when the project was almost completed, in return for an agreement from Germany to take action against Russia if it used gas as a weapon or attacked Ukraine. Germany said Tuesday it was indefinitely suspending the pipeline.

Ukraine's Western supporters said they had already sent out a strong message with a first batch of sanctions on Tuesday. They said Russian troops moving beyond the separatist-held regions would produce more painful sanctions and possibly the biggest war in a generation on Europe's mainland.

"This is the toughest sanctions regime we've ever put in place against Russia," British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said of measures that target key banks that fund the Russian military and oligarchs. "But it will go further, if we see a full-scale invasion of Ukraine."

The European Union finalized a similar package, which also targets legislators in the lower house of Russia's parliament and makes it tougher for Moscow to get on EU financial and capital markets.

U.S. actions announced Tuesday target high-ranking Russian officials and two Russian banks considered especially close to the Kremlin and Russia's military, with more than $80 billion in assets.

How is Ukraine's economy holding up?

It is Ukraine, not Russia, where the economy is eroding the fastest under the threat of war.

One by one, embassies and international offices in Kyiv have closed. Flight after flight was canceled when insurance companies balked at covering planes arriving in Ukraine. Hundreds of millions of dollars in investment dried up within weeks.

The squeezing of Ukraine's economy is a key destabilizing tactic in what the government describes as "hybrid warfare" intended to eat away at the country from within.

The economic woes include restaurants that dare not keep more than a few days of food on hand, stalled plans for a hydrogen production plant that could help wean Europe off Russian gas and uncertain conditions for shipping in the Black Sea, where container ships must carefully edge their way around Russian military vessels.

Ukraine sees more cyberattacks

Ukraine's parliament and other government and banking websites were hit with another wave of distributed-denial-of-service attacks Wednesday.

Unidentified attackers had also infected hundreds of computers with destructive malware, cybersecurity researchers said.

Officials have long said they expect cyberattacks to precede and accompany any Russian military incursion, and analysts said the incidents hew to a nearly two-decade-old Russian playbook of wedding cyber operations with real-world aggression.

How is the confrontation seen in Russia?

Russian state media are portraying Moscow as coming to the rescue of war-torn areas of eastern Ukraine that are tormented by Ukraine's aggression.

TV presenters are professing the end of suffering for the residents of the breakaway regions.

"You paid with your blood for these eight years of torment and anticipation," anchor Olga Skabeyeva said during a popular political talk show Tuesday morning. "Russia will now be defending Donbas."

Channel One struck a more festive tone, with its correspondent in Donetsk asserting that local residents "say it is the best news over the past years of war."

"Now they have confidence in the future and that the years-long war will finally come to an end," she said.

Whether ordinary Russians are buying it is another question.

Off The Wall

Israeli strawberry clocks in as the world's heaviest

KADIMA-ZORAN, Israel (AP)—After a year-long jam, a mammoth Israeli strawberry is entering the record books.

Weighing a whopping 289 grams (10.19 ounces, more than half a pound), the titanic berry this week was declared the world's largest by Guinness World Records.

The strawberry was picked on Chahi Ariel's family farm near the city of Netanya in central Israel in February 2021. But only this week, Guinness confirmed it as the heaviest on record.

"We waited for a year for the results," Ariel said. "We kept it in the freezer for a year. It's no longer as pretty as it was."

The supersized strawberry is a local variety called Ilan that tends to grow to a hefty size. Ariel said the record-setting specimen has shrunk to about half the size it was a year before.

AP

Israeli farmer Chahi Ariel holds a strawberry weighing a whopping 289 grams (over half a pound) in Kadima-Zoran, Israel, Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022.

The previous record-holder for the heaviest strawberry was was a Japanese fruit grown in 2015 in Fukuoka that tipped the scales at 250 grams (8.8 ounces).

The wait turned out to be fruitful. Ariel said he jumped up and down in his car, laughing and singing when he got the news. "We are very happy to be in the Guinness World Records," he said.

Michigan woman turning 100 adds another tattoo

ST. JOSEPH, Mich. (AP)—A Michigan woman soon will celebrate a milestone birthday. How old? Look at her decorative upper arm.

Gloria Weberg has "NY NY 1922" tattooed on her left arm, the year and place of her birth.

Weberg is turning 100 on March 2, not a typical age to visit a tattoo artist. But that's what she has done every 10 years since turning 80, The Herald-Palladium reported.

Her birth year and New York is under a goddess representing Mother Earth—added at age 80—and among seven stars representing her children, which she added at age 90.

Weberg and her late husband raised their family in the Chicago area. She got a college degree at age 55 from Chicago State University and worked as a social worker.

They moved to St. Joseph 30 years ago.

DON CAMPBELL/THE HERALD-PALLADIUM VIA AP

Gloria Weberg shows off a new tattoo on Feb. 3, 2022, at her home in St. Joseph, Mich., that she had added recently to celebrate her 100th birthday.

"My secret is being active," Weberg said of her longevity. "To be aware of what's going on in the world in every way, from what my children were doing, their education, how important that was to me."

She performs aerobics while watching TV news and regularly enjoys a glass of red wine.

A tattoo at 110?

"Probably something like, 'Are you still here?' or 'I'm still here,'" Weberg said.

Raccoon falls through ceiling into LSU dining hall

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP)—A raccoon fell through the ceiling into a packed dining hall at Louisiana State University as students screamed and a cook tried to catch it in a basket.

Freshman Danielle Gipson told The Reveille student newspaper that everyone was standing up and looking around for a raccoon when she went into the 459 Dining Hall for dinner Wednesday.

"I went and still got my food because I thought that it was fake," she said. "The raccoon then ran underneath my table and I immediately got on top of the chair."

One video posted with the article showed the raccoon running between tables, then climbing onto a chair and looking around. Another shows people chasing it with a broom and a stick or perhaps two brooms. Screams are all that can be heard on either.

Gipson says she lost her appetite when friends told her the raccoon had been on top of her bag while she was gone.

"I am just scared that my bag has a disease," she said. "Right now it's funny to look back at, but at the moment, I was traumatized. My appetite is definitely gone."

One of her friends, freshman Hannah Accius, said students got the raccoon into an area where it couldn't run out.

"The raccoon was making its way toward me. It stopped and climbed onto my friend Danielle's bag. Animal Control finally came and tried to catch it in a trash can. A cook even tried to use a basket to catch it. It was a mess," she said.

Eventually, she said, it was caught.

Science & Technology

9,000-year-old shrine is found in Jordan desert

AMMAN, Jordan (AP)—A team of Jordanian and French archaeologists said Tuesday that it had found a roughly 9,000-year-old shrine at a remote Neolithic site in Jordan's eastern desert.

The ritual complex was found in a Neolithic campsite near large structures known as "desert kites," or mass traps that are believed to have been used to corral wild gazelles for slaughter.

Such traps consist of two or more long stone walls converging toward an enclosure and are found scattered across the deserts of the Middle East.

"The site is unique, first because of its preservation state," said Jordanian archaeologist Wael Abu-Azziza, co-director of the project. "It's 9,000 years old and everything was almost intact."

Within the shrine were two carved standing stones bearing anthropomorphic figures, one accompanied by a representation of the "desert kite," as well as an altar, hearth, marine shells and miniature model of the gazelle trap.

AP

This photo provided by Jordan Tourism Ministry shows two carved standing stones at a remote Neolithic site in Jordan's eastern desert.

The researchers said in a statement that the shrine "sheds an entire new light on the symbolism, artistic expression as well as spiritual culture of these hitherto unknown Neolithic populations."

The proximity of the site to the traps suggests the inhabitants were specialized hunters and that the traps were "the center of their cultural, economic and even symbolic life in this marginal zone," the statement said.

The team included archaeologists from Jordan's Al Hussein Bin Talal University and the French Institute of the Near East. The site was excavated during the most recent digging season in 2021.

TECH Q&A: A PC failure can leave you wondering where all the data went

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone*

Q: My Windows 7 PC suffered a failure of the main circuit board and some damage to the hard drive. I lost a lot of data (photos and genealogy files) because a computer technician was unable to recover them from the hard drive. I wondered why the technician was able to recover so little data. Why could he find some pictures, but not all of them? I also was surprised that during the recovery process, many notices said that we did not have the permission to see the files stored on disk drive. Why not?

If I had made a back-up of the data, could more data have been recovered from the hard drive?

A: A recent back-up of your PC's data (to an external hard drive or a USB flash drive) would have made it unnecessary to recover the data from the PC's damaged hard drive. In addition, the back-up process might have given you an early warning of the PC's problems by notifying you that some files on its hard drive couldn't be copied (signifying that they might be damaged.)

But without knowing more about what happened to your hard drive, I can't say exactly why you couldn't recover more data. For example, was the disk damaged by an electrical short circuit between the main circuit board and the drive? Or did the hard drive suffer a "head crash" in which the disk's read-write head stops floating above the disk and strikes the disk's surface?

But any damage could have hindered recovering the data stored on the disk. Here's how:

Normally Windows creates a directory for a hard disk that lists where each file is stored. As the hard disk fills up, newly stored files must be broken into pieces that can fit into available disk space. But even then, the directory can locate where all the pieces are.

The success of recovering files from a damaged hard drive hinges on whether both the directory and the stored data are intact. If the directory has been destroyed, the disk recovery software faces a harder task: It must search the hard disk looking for the different pieces a file, then try to reassemble the file as if it were putting together a jigsaw puzzle. If even one piece of a file can't be found, the entire file is probably unrecoverable.

That would explain your data loss. But why didn't you have "permission" to view some your own files? In Windows, individual files are stored in file folders. Each of these folders has a security component that determines which users of your PC have access to a particular folder. If damage to the disk obliterated a folder's security information, your "permission" to access the folder might no longer exist.

Email tech questions to Steve Alexander at steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name,

Life & Style

Manhattan DA returns artifacts worth $20 million to Greece

NEW YORK (AP)—Dozens of looted antiquities seized from billionaire hedge fund founder Michael Steinhardt after a yearslong investigation have been returned to the people of Greece, prosecutors in New York announced Wednesday.

The artifacts included a sculpture of a young man from about 560 B.C., known as a kouros, that is worth $14 million, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said.

The district attorney's office has accused Steinhardt of relying on a "sprawling underworld of antiquities traffickers, crime bosses, money launderers and tomb raiders" to build his collection.

The handover of the ancient objects to Greece occurred after the district attorney's office announced a deal in December under which Steinhardt was to surrender $70 million worth of artifacts acquired illegally from Greece and other countries including Egypt, Israel, Syria and Turkey.

AP

A sculpture of a young man from about 560 B.C., known as a kouros, is presented at a news conference at the offices of the Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg in New York, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022.

Under the agreement, Steinhardt will not face criminal charges but is subject to an unprecedented lifetime ban on acquiring antiquities. Steinhardt is a co-founder of Birthright Israel and a philanthropist who is chair of the Steinhardt Foundation for Jewish Life.

A total of 55 artifacts worth a collective $20 million are being repatriated to Greece, prosecutors said, 47 of them from Steinhardt's collection and eight from another ongoing investigation.

"While this collection of exquisite ancient artifacts is valued at 20 million dollars, each piece is an irreplaceable display of Greece's enduring strength, history, and cultural heritage," Bragg said in a news release. "I am honored to return these 55 magnificent cultural treasures to the people of Greece—our largest such transfer of antiquities to this nation."

Greek Minister of Culture Lina Mendoni thanked the district attorney's office and added, "The illegal trafficking of our country's cultural treasures is a serious trauma that hurts all Greeks all over the world."

According to prosecutors, Steinhardt purchased the kouros statue from dealer Robert Hecht in November 2000 for $2.3 million. Hecht, who died in Paris in 2012, had long been accused of trafficking in illegally acquired artifacts.

Other items from Steinhardt's collection included a gold brooch from 600 B.C. valued at $1.3 million and a larnax, a small box for human remains, that dates from 1400 to 1200 B.C. and is valued at $1 million, prosecutors said.

Driver: Weinstein in LA area when actor says he raped her

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A limousine driver testified Wednesday that he was driving Harvey Weinstein around Beverly Hills in 2013 on the night that prosecutors allege that Weinstein raped an actor at a hotel there.

The driver, Alfred "Freddy" Baroth, gave conditional testimony in a Los Angeles courtroom that was recorded on video for potential use at the former movie mogul's trial, which has not yet been scheduled.

He testified, based on reviewing records at the limousine company that he owns and drives for, that he was driving Weinstein around Beverly Hills late on the night of Feb. 18, where according to a grand jury indictment Weinstein raped and sexually assaulted the woman.

The drive said he drove Weinstein back to the hotel where he frequently stayed, the Peninsula Beverly Hills, at the end of the night, around 1 a.m.

He said he could not recall if he took Weinstein that night to another Beverly Hills hotel, the Mr. C, where prosecutors allege the rape took place, but that he took Weinstein there about 15 times in the years he drove for him.

Baroth also testified to driving Weinstein around the Los Angeles area in 2010, when others of the 11 sexual assault counts against Weinstein in a grand jury indictment are alleged to have happened. Weinstein has pleaded not guilty.

Baroth, 74, for years essentially served as the personal chauffeur in California for the New York-based Weinstein.

The driver said he had great affection for Weinstein, who treated him well, giving him frequent bonuses for his work, and allowing him to draw hundreds of dollars in cash at will from the front desk at the Peninsula.

He said the parting was emotional the last time he saw Weinstein in October 2017, after a raft of women came forward with stories of Weinstein sexually harassing and assaulting them, making him the central figure in the erupting #MeToo movement.

"It just came to me that it was very heartfelt, this was the last time I was going to see him," Baroth said. "I was tipping my hat."

Dubai's new Museum of the Future envisions a healthy planet

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Dubai will open the doors Friday to an architecturally stunning building housing the new Museum of the Future, a seven-story structure that envisions a dreamlike world powered by solar energy and the Gulf Arab state's frenetic quest to develop.

The torus-shaped museum is a design marvel that forgoes support columns, relying instead on a network of diagonal beams. It is enveloped in windows carved by Arabic calligraphy, adding another eye-popping design element to Dubai's piercingly modern skyline that shimmers with the world's tallest tower, the Burj Khalifa.

The Museum of the Future projects Dubai's ambitions and its desire to be seen as a modern, inclusive city even as its political system remains rooted in hereditary rule and hard limits exist on the types of expression permitted. It is the latest in a stream of feats for Dubai, which is the first country in the Middle East to host the World's Fair.

AP

People visit the Museum of the Future, an exhibition space for innovative and futuristic ideas in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022.

Teen feels overwhelmed as challenges pile up

DEAR ABBY: I'm a teen girl having some trouble right now. I was in an abusive family. Most of my life, I was bullied because I separated from them because they were doing drugs. I have serious depression, and my foster family hasn't noticed. I have given them plenty of signs (I have trouble talking about my feelings), but they ignore them.

I had a best friend who helped me through the pain, but she started showing her true colors and turned out to be a jerk. I am also having trouble finding someone who will love me, because I want to be in love.

Everyone treats me like a little kid, even though I'm the oldest. Sorry for dumping all my problems on you, but I really need help. It's not fun crying myself to sleep every night.

DEPRESSED GIRL IN IOWA

DEAR DEPRESSED GIRL: I am sure it's not fun. You have had some hurdles to climb, but you are in your teens and not a "little kid." You should not be keeping your sadness bottled up inside. That's why it's important you find a trusted adult you can talk with about your feelings. If you are in school, a counselor or teacher you trust may be able to provide the support and understanding you are looking for.

While most people want to find someone to love who will love them back, I think you would be wise to put that on the back burner until you are stronger emotionally. If you can do that, you will make better choices in the future.

***

DEAR ABBY: I committed a sin with my husband's brother many years ago that I have regretted ever since. I have confessed to God, but I need to tell someone. (I know you cannot absolve my mistake.)

My husband was not very affectionate, but we went on to have a family and many good years together. I guess I don't feel I deserved all those blessings. How can I get rid of this feeling of guilt for what I did?

EVIL LADY IN THE SOUTH

DEAR LADY: Because you won't allow me to absolve you from the "one sin you committed many years ago," please discuss it with a religious adviser. If you are afraid to do that with your own priest, pastor, rabbi, etc., make an appointment to talk with one in a different community. While you may be racked with guilt, believe me, nothing you confess is something they haven't heard before. I hope it helps you to stop flogging yourself.

***

DEAR ABBY: Please clear this up for me. My mother recently passed away. My family and I miss her every day. Her funeral was prepaid, so there were no additional expenses for my family. In the funeral notice, we asked that people give memorials of money to the charity listed, or a charity of the donor's choice.

My co-workers collected money and gave it to me. Was the money intended to be a charitable donation from them in my mother's honor, or was it meant for me personally? I'm confused.

CONFUSED IN MINNESOTA

DEAR CONFUSED: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your mother. Because your co-workers didn't specify otherwise, assume they followed the guidelines in the obituary and the money is for charity. Thank them for their generosity and leave it at that.

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

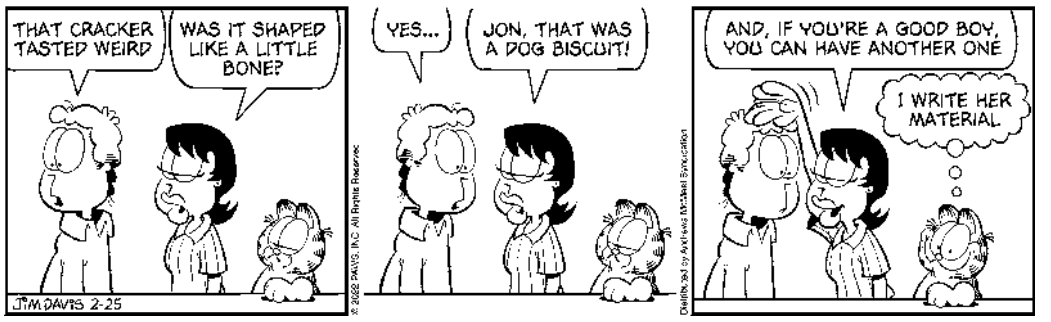
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HELLO, IS THIS THE HARDWARE STORE? YES, I'M WONDERING IF YOU SELL CATAPULTS.
NO?? WELL, I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT CAN DELIVER A 50-POUND PAYLOAD OF SNOW ON A SMALL FEMININE TARGET. CAN YOU SUGGEST SOMETHING?
HELLO?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW SOME OF THESE PLACES STAY IN BUSINESS.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


THAT CRACKER TASTED WEIRD
WAS IT SHAPED LIKE A LITTLE BONE?
YES...
JON, THAT WAS A DOG BISCUIT!
AND, IF YOU'RE A GOOD BOY, YOU CAN HAVE ANOTHER ONE
I WRITE HER MATERIAL
JIM DAVIS 2-25

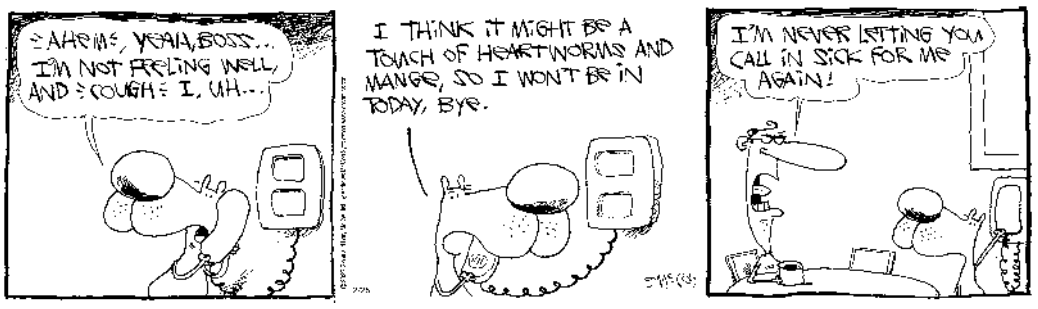
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

I JUST WANT ONE MORE SIP OF COFFEE.
WHY? YOU ALMOST GAGGED.
I'M NOT SURE WHY. I JUST WANT A...
OH NO! AM I HOOKED? AM I???
CHASING THE DRAGON AT SIX??? THIS IS BAD!!
WELL, AT LEAST YOU'RE NOT BEING DRAMATIC ABOUT IT.
2-25

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


AHEM, YEAH, BOSS... I'M NOT FEELING WELL, AND COUGH I, UH...
I THINK IT MIGHT BE A TOUCH OF HEARTWORMS AND MANGE, SO I WON'T BE IN TODAY, BYE.
I'M NEVER LETTING YOU CALL IN SICK FOR ME AGAIN!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Shriver of tennis
4 Angelic ring
8 Actress Sorvino
12 Frazier foe
13 Sharif of film
14 Mountain goat
15 Money-makers
17 Ore source
18 Serve wine
19 Styles
20 — -ski
22 Many corp. recruits
24 Maui garlands
25 Actor's visual aids
29 Directional ending
30 Joins
31 Fair hirer, in ads
32 Spend less
34 Pinnacle
35 Mimic
36 Animator Tex
37 Berate
40 Cruising
41 Prefix with normal or chute
42 Sound of hoofbeats
46 Detail
47 Mata —
48 Lamb's mama
49 Office part-timer
50 Oil cartel
51 Morning moisture

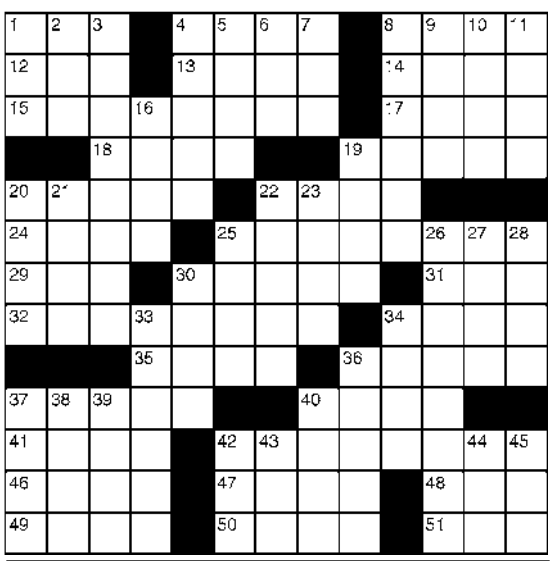
DOWN

1 Lobbying gp.
2 Carte lead-in
3 Typo
4 — -pocus
5 Cupid's specialty
6 Order partner
7 Hosp. areas
8 Brunch cocktail
9 Footnote abbr.
10 Painter Magritte
11 Chopping tools
16 Works the soil
19 PC alternatives
20 Sir Guinness
21 Andean land
22 Having a damp smell
23 Honey bunch?
25 Point
26 Annulled
27 Active person
28 Hot
30 Chow
33 Wood-shop device
34 With (Fr.)
36 Jellied entree
37 Roasting rod
38 Actress Blanchett
39 Utah city
40 Suffix for billion
42 Comedian Margaret
43 Napkin's place
44 Have bills
45 Church seat

Solution time: 25 mins.

B	E	V	Y	■	S	T	P	■	S	P	O	T
A	S	I	A	■	P	O	I	■	N	A	J	A
A	T	O	M	■	O	W	N	■	A	Y	E	S
S	A	L	A	M	I	■	A	R	F	S	■	■
■	■	■	F	A	I	F	T	R	U	T	I	S
C	S	P	A	N	■	L	A	S	■	U	A	W
A	I	R	S	■	W	A	S	■	A	B	R	A
N	H	A	■	D	A	S	■	O	L	S	E	N
S	E	C	O	N	D	H	A	L	F	■	■	■
■	■	■	T	O	A	D	■	L	E	R	N	E	R
W	H	I	Z	■	L	A	B	■	E	C	C	E
P	A	C	E	■	E	M	U	■	D	I	O	N
A	G	E	D	■	D	I	M	■	O	S	L	O

Yesterday's answer 2-25



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Rashida Jones, 46; Chelsea Handler, 47; Sean Astin, 51; Tea Leoni, 56.

Happy Birthday: Get your facts straight. Don't act on assumptions. Be realistic about what's possible. Be specific, have your plans mapped out according to your skills, time and desire. Success comes from doing what's best for you. Less time spent worrying about what others think or do and more time to your needs will encourage success and happiness. Your numbers are 6, 13, 23, 29, 34, 38, 40.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Misinformation is apparent when trying to sort through documents and online sites and talkig to experts and authority figures. Leave nothing to chance; when in doubt, ask questions, get written documentation and follow through on any discrepancies you encounter. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't let confusion regarding financial, legal or medical issues go unsolved. Address a concern and gather pertinent facts. Knowledge is power when faced with controversy or opposition. Don't make unnecessary changes or lateral moves. Make every step you take count. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Work alone and ignore drama. Size up situations, and walk away if anything appears faulty or far-fetched. Do your due diligence and get out the truth. Refuse to let anyone railroad you using emotional manipulation or lies. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Proceed with your plans. Explore your options, and develop ideas that are unique and excite you. Gather information, check out the competition and network with those who show interest in what you are doing. Embrace the unusual, and consider partnerships that offer benefits. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Put everything you've got into working ahead. Don't let someone who holds you back have a say. Take responsibility for your actions and accomplishments. Don't wait for opportunities to come to you; manifest them. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Formulate your next move. Make your home functional. Concentrate on what brings you joy and satisfies your soul. Explore how to use your skills, attributes and experience more effectively. Join forces with someone who brings out the best in you. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Assess, review and make any necessary alterations. Use experience, resources and intelligence to figure out what works best for you and will help you maintain a healthy financial position. Keep your life simple and functional, and focus on what's important to you. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You know the drill, so why hesitate? Plunge into what interests you, and embrace new possibilities. Consider new ways to repurpose old ideas and put your tools to work for you. It's what you do that will make the difference. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Rethink your connection to someone who tends to get you in trouble or leans on you too much. Put temptation on the back burner, and don't forget regrets. Use your smarts to recognize when someone is taking advantage of you. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Someone will complicate matters if you are gullible or too accommodating. Look out for your best interests and make beneficial changes. Home improvements will add to your comfort and ease stress. Put the past behind you. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Reconnect with people who put a smile on your face. A good laugh will do you a world of good and help you get over any regrets or disappointments you harbor. Put your heart into something you enjoy doing. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Incomplete information that can set you off emotionally is likely. When in doubt, take the time to research. Go directly to the source and ask pertinent questions to ensure you make the right decision. Stay calm and look over all options. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are creative, emotional and complex. You are changeable and kind.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		5			9			
		1			7			
7	4	2	6			5		
						2	3	8
2	6	8		4				
		9			8	4	5	6
		6			1			
		3			7			

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/25

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	3	2	1	6	8	9	7	5
8	9	1	5	4	7	2	6	3
7	6	5	2	9	3	1	8	4
1	2	4	7	5	6	8	3	9
5	8	3	9	1	4	7	2	6
6	7	9	3	8	2	5	4	1
9	4	7	8	3	1	6	5	2
2	5	6	4	7	9	3	1	8
3	1	8	6	2	5	4	9	7

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

SIDNEY POITIER (1927-2022) **Solution: 11 letters**

A	O	N	E	T	A	R	A	P	E	S	I	R	A	P
N	C	R	E	A	C	H	B	A	H	A	M	I	A	N
I	S	A	A	C	C	E	P	T	A	T	I	K	I	N
G	E	C	D	T	V	B	P	C	Ⓕ	Ⓘ	Ⓛ	Ⓜ	I	O
U	N	S	S	E	L	A	B	H	I	N	K	M	N	E
E	U	O	R	U	M	E	Y	M	M	A	R	G	F	T
S	M	L	E	E	S	Y	G	H	A	U	E	I	L	H
S	Y	A	L	T	H	T	A	E	N	J	L	Y	U	E
M	B	A	N	P	I	R	N	W	N	N	K	E	E	J
I	A	A	O	D	D	D	A	I	A	D	E	N	N	A
A	R	R	F	Y	E	T	E	K	O	R	D	D	T	C
M	T	R	G	T	S	L	I	C	J	P	D	Y	I	K
I	S	R	E	R	A	N	A	P	A	J	T	S	A	A
I	O	D	I	H	A	N	N	C	A	R	R	O	L	L
P	O	F	N	S	S	E	B	E	L	O	V	E	D	S

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Academy Awards, Accept, Aced, Anika, Arts, BAFTA, Bahamian, Beloved, Bess, Best, Beverly, Blue, De Klerk, Dihann Carroll, Film, First, Gina, Grammy, Guess, Hardy, Influential, Ink, Japan, Joanna, Juanita, Legend, Life, Mandela, Miami, Most, Nikita, Oscar, Pamela, Paris, Patch, Point, Porgy, Reach, Separate, Sherri, Sydney, The Jacka., Trophy, UNESCO

Yesterday's Answer: Water Tower

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

Season to be shortened if no deal by end of Monday

JUPITER, Fla. (AP)—Major League Baseball said only five days remain to salvage March 31 openers and a full season, telling locked out players that games would be canceled if a labor contract is not agreed to by the end of Monday.

After the third straight day of negotiations with little movement, MLB went public with what it had told the union on Feb. 12. "A deadline is a deadline. Missed games are missed games. Salary will not be paid for those games," an MLB spokesman said after Wednesday's bargaining ended. The spokesman spoke on behalf of MLB on the condition the spokesman not be identified by name.

Players have not accepted Monday as a deadline and have suggested any missed games could be made up as part of doubleheaders, a method MLB said it will not agree to.

The union told MLB if games are missed and salaries are lost, clubs should not expect players to agree to management's proposals to expand the postseason and to allow advertisements on uniforms and helmets.

Bargaining is scheduled to continue Thursday, and both sides said they are prepared to meet through Monday.

A shortened season would be baseball's second in three years following a 2020 schedule cut from 162 games to 60 because of the coronavirus pandemic. The last seasons truncated by labor strife were during the strike that ended the 1994 schedule on Aug. 12 and caused the start of the following season to be delayed from April 2 to April 25. The 1995 schedule was reduced from 162 games to 144.

Players are paid only during the regular season, accruing 1/162nd of their salary daily. Players would be subject to losing as much as $232,975 daily in the case of Mets pitcher Max Scherzer, or as little as $3,441 for a player at a $640,000 minimum.

Baseball's work stoppage was in its 84th day, and the three sessions this week increased the total on core economic issues to just nine since the lockout began Dec. 2.

Spring training workouts had been scheduled to start on Feb. 16, and MLB already has canceled the first week of exhibitions, which were to begin Friday.

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said on Feb. 10 a minimum of four weeks of training are needed before starting the season. A deal by Monday would allow that plus a few days for players to report to camps in Arizona and Florida.

Manfred has spoken publicly just once since the day the lockout began and union head Tony Clark not at all.

MLB's public statement was interpreted as a pressure tactic by the union, which was angered payrolls decreased during the expired five-year deal and an increased number of teams jettisoned higher-salaries veterans and transitioned to rebuilding mode.

AP

Major League Baseball Players Association executive director Tony Clark, left, and chief negotiator Bruce Meyer arrive for contract negotiations at Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter, Fla., Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022.

"To get bears in the forest, you can't offer them bear traps," said Scott Boras, agent for five of eight players on the union's executive subcommittee.

A day after the union made only small moves in response to management's incremental proposal of a day earlier, MLB advanced only one change: Teams offered to increase the minimum salary from $570,500 to $640,000, up from their previous proposal of $630,000. The minimum would increase by an additional $10,000 each season during a five-year agreement. Clubs withdrew their proposal for a tiered minimum, which players opposed.

Players have asked for $775,000 in 2022 and additional $30,000 jumps in each succeeding season. The union evaluated MLB's proposal as adding $5 million annually.

There was no discussion Wednesday on the key issue of luxury tax thresholds and rates, but players voiced their concern over a lack of competition and the need for younger players to get higher salaries earlier in their careers.

The union proposed a $115 million pool of money that would go to 150 pre-arbitration players annually, while the clubs offered $20 million that would be distributed to 30.

Yankees pitchers Gerrit Cole and Zack Britton joined the talks, two of six members on hand from the executive subcommittee that supervises the negotiations. They were joined by Scherzer, free agent pitcher Andrew Miller, Mets shortstop Francisco Lindor, and Houston catcher Jason Castro.

Rangers top prospect Jung has surgery to repair torn labrum

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
AP BASEBALL WRITER

Texas Rangers top prospect Josh Jung had surgery Wednesday to repair a torn labrum in his left shoulder, ending the third baseman's chance of being an option for the big league roster this spring.

Jung was lifting weights before the opening of the team's minor league camp in Arizona when he felt discomfort in his non-throwing shoulder. He was initially diagnosed last week with a strain.

"That was the impetus for us getting a test on his shoulder, which revealed a level of damage that obviously has required surgery," general manager Chris Young said. "The extent of preexisting damage in there, we're not certainly sure. But all in all, we know it's repaired at this point."

Young said team physician Dr. Keith Meister, who performed the surgery in Arlington, Texas, described the procedure as being "straightforward" with Jung expected to make a full recovery. Jung could be available to be a designated hitter in about six months.

"This is a tough break for Josh, but given his character and work ethic, we're fully confident Josh is going to make a full recovery and bounce back from this," Young said.

Jung, the eighth overall pick in MLB's amateur draft in 2019 out of Texas Tech, had a stress fracture in his left foot last spring. He hit .326 with 19 home runs and 61 RBIs in 78 games combined at the Double-A and Triple-A levels last year after missing the first two months of the season because of that injury.

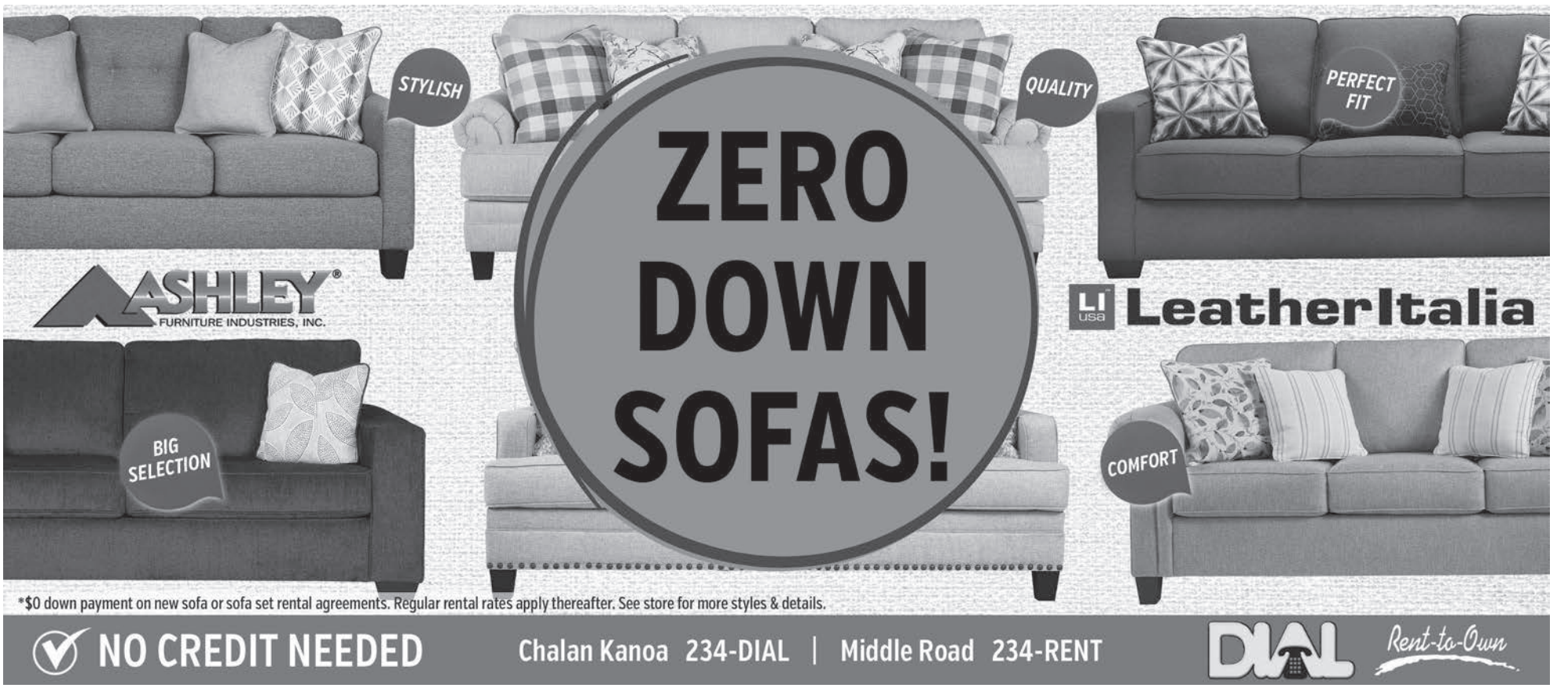
With the MLB lockout ongoing, Young wasn't able to discuss what impact Jung's injury could have on the team's big league roster.

The 24-year-old third baseman isn't on the Rangers' 40-man roster, so was able to be in their minor league camp. It was widely anticipated that he would have been given an opportunity this spring to compete for a roster spot in the big league camp.

Even though the surgery was on his non-throwing shoulder, Jung is expected to return to hitting before playing defense. He could aggravate any recovery diving for balls in the field or extending his left arm to catch them.

In the days before the MLB lockout began Dec. 2, Texas spent a half-billion dollars in free agency to sign the middle infield of two-time All-Star shortstop Corey Seager ($325 million, 10-year deal) and Gold Glove second baseman Marcus Semien ($175 million seven-year deal).

Texas still has Isiah Kiner-Falefa, who was the starting shortstop last season after being a Gold Glove third baseman for the Rangers during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season. Jung's injury likely ensures Kiner-Falefa being their starting third baseman again whenever the season does start.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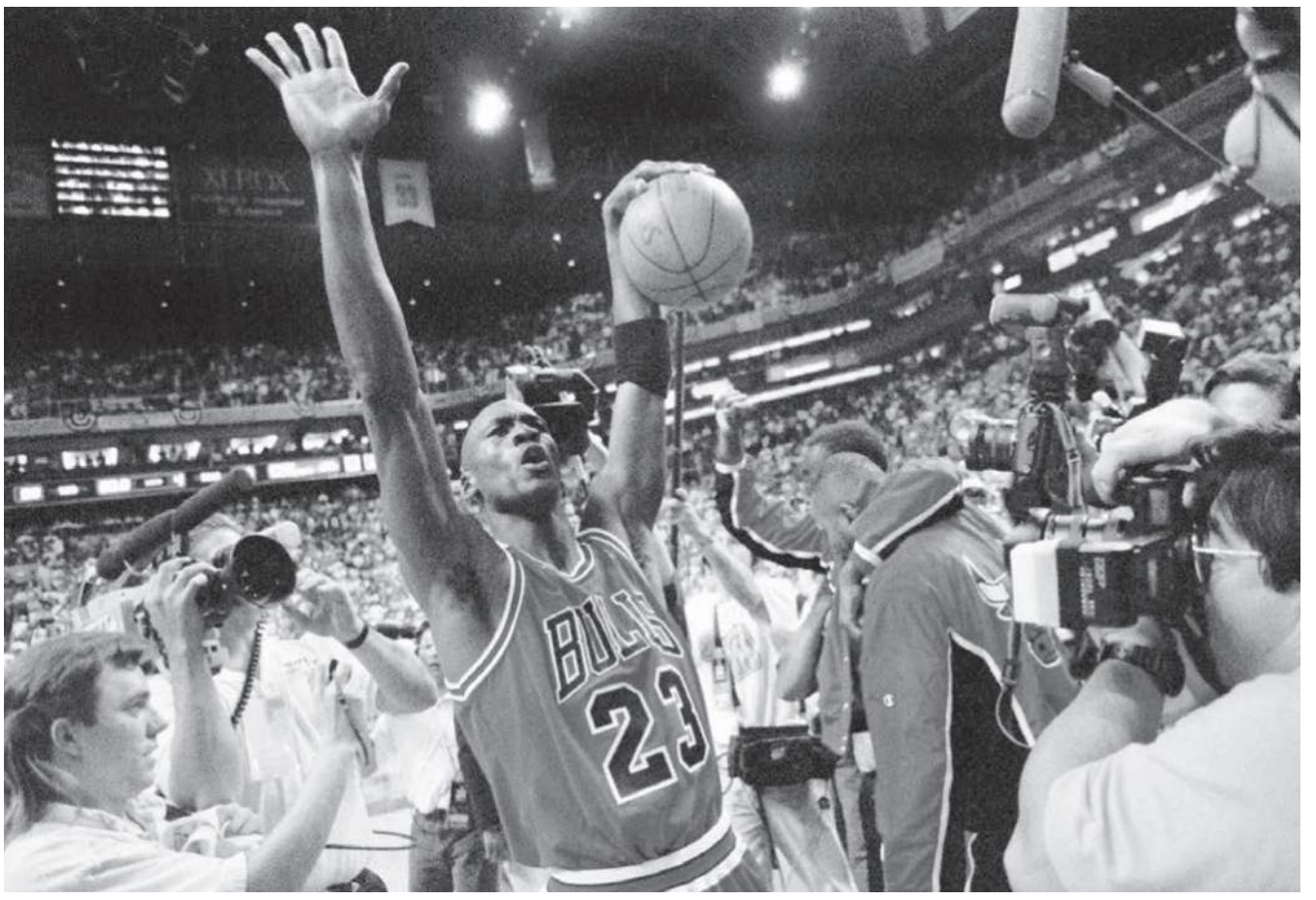
The 1990s: Jordan era takes flight; Magic battles HIV virus

By BRIAN MAHONEY
AP BASKETBALL WRITER



AP

The Chicago Bulls Michael Jordan celebrates after the Bulls beat the Phoenix Suns 99-98 to win their third consecutive NBA title in Phoenix, June 20, 1993.

Michael Jordan had just won his first championship, beating Magic Johnson in the NBA Finals. They were poised to lead a Dream Team the world couldn't wait to watch.

Yes, the NBA rolled into the fall of 1991 with unlimited promise.

Jordan, already basketball's best and most popular player, was now on its top team. The 1992 Olympics were just a year away and for the first time would include NBA players, opening international doors the league previously couldn't reach.

Then, suddenly, the foundation that never felt stronger was rocked by devastating news.

When Johnson announced that November he had contracted the HIV virus and would retire immediately, the sadness wasn't just over the end of his career. There was fear for his life.

The virus caused AIDS, which was considered a death sentence at the time. People who got AIDS died, it was thought, just as Queen lead singer Freddie Mercury did the month Johnson retired. The consternation around the HIV virus then was similar to the mixed feelings the country and world has about COVID-19.

The NBA was still a relatively young league, just 45 years old, when Johnson disclosed his condition some fans thought one of its most beloved players was going to die.

Only Johnson didn't die. Instead, he's credited for saving lives.

With the unrelenting backing of NBA Commissioner David Stern, Johnson would return to play in the 1992 All-Star Game, winning MVP honors and providing hope for health that had been mostly missing.

"We used to talk about it all the time, how we changed the world and we changed HIV and AIDS on that particular day, as well as we saved a lot of people's lives that day," Johnson tearfully recalled in 2020 at a memorial service for Stern.

But those conversations weren't the norm for the NBA at that time.

Unlike the active role players took in the 1950s and '60s, or take today when it comes to social issues and race relations, during the 1990s players largely shied away from issues outside of basketball.

Johnson and Larry Bird loathed discussions of race that was at the center of their rivalry in the 1980s. Jordan refused to endorse Black candidate Harvey Gantt in his 1990 North Carolina senate race against Jesse Helms.

When Rodney King was beaten by Los Angeles police in March of 1991, there was nothing from players similar to the Milwaukee Bucks' refusal to play a playoff game in 2020 following the shooting of Jacob Blake in Wisconsin.

But Johnson's announcement forced the NBA to deal with an issue many Americans hadn't been ready to address.

Orin Starn, a professor of cultural anthropology at Duke, said Johnson and the NBA helped changed the way AIDS was viewed — an illness for homosexuals, and those who weren't gay didn't care to learn how it was contracted or spread.

"So in that context, to have one of the most famous men in America and one of the most well-liked men in America, Magic Johnson, announce that he had HIV/AIDS was a huge deal," Starn said. "And it kind of marked the entry of AIDS into the national consciousness in a new way also, because it made people realize that, hey, this isn't just a problem for gay Americans or for intravenous drug users.

"It's a problem everybody needs to address."

The NBA began educating its players. That included stars like Karl Malone, who like others, had concerns about playing with Johnson. Terry Lyons, a longtime NBA executive, remembers calls coming into the league office with questions they couldn't answer.

A doctor was brought in to address players and coaches during the 1992 All-Star weekend in Orlando. Public health education became a responsibility within the league, one that has continued into the coronavirus pandemic.

Johnson then went as planned to the Barcelona Olympics, where the U.S. suited up what may still be the best team in sports history. Opponents were overpowered and fans overjoyed by the Dream Team, a roster of NBA All-Stars who willingly blended their talents to play basketball at the highest level ever seen.

One of those stars shined brighter than the rest.

Jordan, whose Bulls won their second of three straight titles in 1992, stood alone as a player and a pitchman. There was no rival in the way Johnson had Bird, or Wilt Chamberlain had Bill Russell. Jordan was the biggest thing in the sport and one of the most recognizable athletes in the world.

Little changed even when he retired in 1993 and went on to play minor league baseball. Hakeem Olajuwon led the Houston Rockets to the 1994 and '95 titles, but Jordan returned to the NBA and soon regained his grip on the league. He didn't give it back until he retired again.

Charles Barkley, Clyde Drexler, Gary Payton, Malone and John Stockton all were victims of Jordan's 6-0 mark in the NBA Finals, while Patrick Ewing and Reggie Miller lost out on title shots when Jordan derailed their opportunities before they even had a chance.

With Johnson breaking down barriers off the court, Jordan had taken flight on it and the NBA was soaring five years after one the league's darkest days ever.

The Bulls started a second run of three straight titles in 1995-96 and Jordan was back full-time — things looked better than ever. The growth of the NBA was evident with expansion into Canada for the Toronto Raptors and Vancouver Grizzlies.

The Bulls became the first NBA team to win 70 games and they seemed even bigger off the court, the team of Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Dennis Rodman and coach Phil Jackson attracting a worldwide following. Shortly after they won the '96 championship, the NBA welcomed one of its deepest draft classes, a group that included Kobe Bryant, Allen Iverson, Steve Nash and Ray Allen.

The rookies knew they were walking into Jordan's NBA.

"Michael was on the Bulls when I came in the league, so I didn't come in expecting to win, that's for sure," Nash said. "It was in a sense alarming to play against him. because you'd sat there and watched him win and win and win, and be so dominant and be someone that everyone was intimidated by."

Adding to the euphoria of the 1995-96 season: Magic Johnson, who was heathy enough to return and play in 32 games.

Starn, who lived in San Francisco at the time of Johnson's retirement and recalls the sadness for homosexuals who knew infected friends and were resigned to watching them die, said seeing Johnson playing again provided hope that medication had stopped AIDS from being a death sentence.

During the 1990s, the true globalization of the NBA began and the league took a huge step in the ongoing struggle for gender equity in sports.

The 1996 Atlanta Olympics were a coming-out party for women's basketball, and the league launched the WNBA in 1997. Jordan was gone again by the end of the decade, but by then NBA drafts were featuring international players such as Dirk Nowitzki and Manu Ginobili, another legacy of the Dream Team.

Once Jordan, Johnson and their teammates showed the best of basketball to the rest of the world, everyone seemed to want to be in the NBA.

Garland, LeVert out with injuries as Cavs return from break

CLEVELAND (AP)— The Cavaliers are coming back from the All-Star break at less than full strength.

All-Star guard Darius Garland will miss Cleveland's game Thursday night at Detroit with a back issue that has slowed him for weeks while newly acquired guard Caris LeVert is sidelined with a sprained right foot.

Garland sat out five games with lower back soreness prior to last week's All-Star stoppage. The 22-year-old took part in All-Star Weekend activities, scoring 13 points in Team LeBron's win Sunday.

Cavs coach J.B. Bickerstaff did not mention anything about Garland or LeVert's status following Wednesday's practice.

The Cavs have had to overcome injuries all season — leading scorer Collin Sexton and guard Ricky Rubio were lost for the year with knee injuries — and are currently fourth in the Eastern Conference at 35-23.

LeVert has played in four games since the Cavs acquired him a trade with Indiana before the deadline, averaging 13.3 points and 3.8 assists.

He's made one start with Cleveland and Bickerstaff has been toying with the idea of having LeVert in his opening lineup. He's also figuring out how the 6-foot-6 scorer fits in best to Cleveland's offensive schemes.

"We sat down and had some conversations about where he's comfortable, where he likes the ball, places where he's had the most success in his past," Bickerstaff said of LeVert. "I think we have a great understanding of how we can get it done. The next thing becomes actually going out and doing it."

It's not yet known when LeVert injured his foot.

While they'll be without Garland and LeVert, the Cavs could have forward Lauri Markkanen back against the Pistons after he missed 11 games with a severely sprained right ankle suffered on Jan. 22.

Markkanen, who is in his first season with Cleveland, practiced Wednesday and the Cavs will see how it responds before deciding if he'll play.

When Markkanen is available, Bickerstaff can play a "tall ball" lineup with rookie forward Evan Mobley (6-foot-11) and All-Star center Jarrett Allen (6-10). Markkanen's injury looked more serious when he went down and he's excited to get back on the floor.

"I've rolled my ankle before, I know how it feels," he said. "But this felt different, so I was a little disappointed when it happened. I think it hurt more than my previous ankle sprains, so I thought it was going to be more significant. But when I did the imaging and found out what it was, it was a relief that I might not miss as much time as I thought."

7th Saipan Aquathlon & 10K Run tomorrow

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Triathlon Association of the CNMI will be hosting the 7th Saipan Aquathlon & 10K Pathway Run tomorrow starting from the Kilili Pavilion in Oleai.

The race is part of the Road to Tagaman Race Series with the aquathlon consisting of a 2.5-kilometer run from the Kilili Pavilion to across Chars Store and back, a 1-km swim twice around the buoys, and capped by another 2.5-km run on the same route. The 10-km run will be from the same starting point as the aquathlon going north toward the turnaround at the Garapan Basketball Court across Bank of Guam.

TRAC secretary general Rickey Castro said they're expecting around 50 participants for both events. Top 3 finishers for both the aquathlon and 10-km run will be awarded medals.

Registration fee is $20 and includes an event T-shirt. Late registration on race day itself is $30. To register, point your browsers to https://www.webscorer.com/register?raceid=264430&fbclid=IwAR2bjyJA3s9cRuWUuI6NfzNVhMesPLwO8RrbyktVFrAmij3ERMVHL_UHIuc and for more information, email swimbikerun.saipan@gmail.com.

The 7th Saipan Aquathlon & 10K Pathway Run is sponsored by IT&E and the Tan Siu Lin Foundation.

Last year, Shuji Kuroda topped the men's aquathlon with a time of 56:19. He was followed by Isaiah Aleksenko in 57:22 with Whitney Altizer completing the Top 3 in 1:00:37. On the women's race, Kaithlyn Chavez was first in 1:07:53 with Denise Myers and Kerri Bauer finishing second and third with times of 1:03:31 and 1:09:44, respectively.

In the 10-km run, Abel Tomas was the first to cross the finish line in 45:01, followed by Edward Dela Cruz Jr. (46:00) and Daniel Stutzman (52:41). The women were paced by Akiko Miller (50:12) with Katarina Obsivanova (55:54) and Lydia Tan (58:57) competing the Top 3.

MARK RABAGO

Shuji Kuroda, seen here in a file photo, topped the men's aquathlon of last year's 6th Saipan Aquathlon & 10K Pathway Run.

NICKOLE

From Page 24

performance on the mat.

"We didn't know what to expect. I was afraid that she might get hurt, cry, or have stage fright. It's her first tournament and I was overwhelmed with emotion when she won. She deserves it."

Her father attributes Nickole's two golds and one bronze haul in the tournament to her daughter's dedication to the martial arts and her discipline and focus.

"I'm proud like any father would be when their kids win. We worked drills everyday at home including after her jiu jitsu classes at Black Label Gym. The biggest thing was working on her fight attitude and never giving up. I am very proud that Nickole has come this far especially competing at a higher age bracket and weight on top of her original bracket."

He added that Nikole's instructor, Malachy Friedman, is very invested in her and was the one that added Nickole into a higher bracket to gain additional exposure in competing.

"He mentioned that she had great potential and it showed during the competition. I didn't know what to expect before she fought in the heavier bracket and when she placed third with the bigger kids, it came as a surprise. I was overwhelmed with joy just like her mother," he said.

Nickole has been practicing jiu jitsu since she was 3 years old. She started with Gracie Barra Gym in Hawaii then enrolled at Black Label Gym when the family moved to Charleston, South Carolina.

Asked why he allowed her daughter to get into jiu jitsu, Nikko said he and his wife wanted her to learn how to defend herself.

"It was rough trying to keep her engaged at the age of 3, but she eventually persevered and developed a love for it. We see her staying with the sport for a very long time."

Nickole said she wants to be the best she could be in the sport one day and Nikko assured he'll be there every step of the way.

"I plan to support this by having her compete as much as she is able too, so she gains experience and the competition speed. The future is inevitable and we wish she develops the interest to compete at higher levels. Ultimately, I want her to have a skill that she will keep for the rest of her life even after I'm gone. Jiu jitsu teaches more than just defending yourself, it develops discipline and patience."

Other than jiu jitsu, Nickole like most islanders loves the water and enjoys swimming a lot. Additionally, she also enjoys reading books and taking a ride on her bike to the playground by their house.

The Salem family last visited Saipan in Christmas of 2017, which also happened to be the first time Nickole met her paternal grandfather, Ricardo Salem.

"We celebrated her first birthday at Pacific Islands Club while we were there," said Nikko, who is a proud 2012 graduate of Saipan Southern High School. His wife is an alumnae of Marianas High School

AUSTRALIA

From Page 24

ing," he said.

Aside from sending athletes to the Mini Games, Australia and New Zealand will also be sending their technical officials to the Mini Games, which the CNMI will be hosting for the first time ever.

"The entire Oceania region is assisting us with technical delegates and the international federations and their group of technical staff will be assisting us in the Mini Games through different sports," he said.

Babauta also said the Pacific Games Council hasn't determined yet how many athletes from Tokelau they will help in sending to the Mini Games.

"Tokelau is normally is a small country. From my understanding and based on previous Mini Games they average about 6-8 athletes," he said, while adding that aside from PGC grants to athletes, grants are also available from Oceania National Olympic Committee as far as travel assistance goes.

Asked if the games organizing committee will implement strict protocols for COVID-19 once delegations start coming in, Babauta said the bare minimum is that participants—athletes and officials—should be vaccinated and have taken booster shots.

"Proof vaccination and booster shots…Part of the requirement are athletes and officials must be fully vaccinated and also booster, including NMI athletes…No more quarantine and no more five-day quarantine… I'm also crossing my fingers that the entire pandemic improves by that time," he said.

And talking about delegations coming in, Tahiti has already chartered a flight and they'll be arriving on June 15, according to the games organizing committee CEO.

STRONG

From Page 24

right mid and the Guam defense thought he would take the shot, but instead he lobed it over two Guam defenders with the ball landing in front of Markus Toves, who then went for a cross, giving the NMI a 3-1 lead in the 57th minute.

It was Toves' second straight goal, as he had his first six minutes earlier to open the second half action. As for the NMI's first goal, Bachani did two things to set up his own goal, as he broke a passing play of Guam and went head-to-head with Guam goalie Jacob Toves, taking the shot before the latter was able to move in and attempt a save.

For the NMI's last goal, Merrick Toves and Steele teamed up in the nice offensive play. The keeper, who was also credited for several saves in the first and second halves, as he used his long arms to knock off Guam's lobs, started the play by moving the ball around with his teammates before sending the long pass from around the left defense area to Steele. The ball dropped exactly where Steele was—near right center—and the midfielder took just a couple of dribbles before unloading the shot to pad the NMI's lead, halfway through the second half.

The visiting team went on to keep its safe lead the rest of the way, as it limited Guam U17 crew's scoring opportunities and when the hosts did, the shots were either way off the mark or Merrick Toves was there for the save.

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association technical director and men's head coach Michiteru Mira lauded his players for the strong work in the last game and encouraged them to build up from this achievement.

"Use this win as a motivation to keep working hard and improving our individual and team skills and tactics. Train hard and consistently so we can execute our plays well and get positive results," Mita said during their dugout meeting after the game.

"This has been a good training camp and we would like to thank everyone, especially the leadership of both the NMIFA and Guam Football Association for making this happen. We had the opportunity to evaluate our teams and see where we are now and what we have to further work on to improve and close the gap not only with Guam but also with other Asian countries," the NMIFA technical director added.

NMI Women's U18 unbeaten

The NMI Women's U18 National Team battled back from a sluggish first half to also finish strong following a 4-0 shutout win over Guam.

Allyssya Angeles fired two goals for the NMI, while Pia Ngewakl and Kaithlynn Chavez contributed one apiece. The visiting team swept Guam in their U18 friendly, as it defeated the hosts in similar scores last Saturday.

NMI Women's U18 coach Irish Pagarao was pleased with the pair of wins, but acknowledged more the players' chance to experience what it's like to play off-island and challenge competitive teams.

"The camp was a great opportunity for the younger kids. They get to experience what it's like to play off-island and in a very competitive environment. I know they learned a lot from this training camp and I hope they will take these lessons back home to continue to improve their game," Pagarao said.

Mita also commented on the shots that the NMI players made, saying that these opportunities happen as players become more observant on what's transpiring on the pitch.

"We've continued practice and built the team with the concept of 'Intentionally create attacking plays and intentionally gain the ball.' Both goals are a bit lucky but they observed opponents and attacked their weakness. These goals are intentionally created by players. Also, through these plays, players realized how important it is to play as a team and have a 90-minute game fitness to play in this kind of intense game. You have to play fast and keep pressing and continuously involved attacking and defending at the same time," Mita said.

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Season to be shortened if no deal by end of Monday

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

7th Saipan Aquathlon & 10K Run tomorrow

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Strong finish for NMI Men's U20

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

GUAM—The NMI Men's U20 National Team capped its training camp here with an impressive 4-1 victory over Guam U17 in their friendly match last Wednesday night at the Guam Football Association National Training Center.

The victory was a big rebound from the visiting squad's 0-2 loss in their first friendly game last weekend. Dev Bachani, Richard Steele, and Markus Toves scored for the NMI with the latter making twin goals. The last two goals—one each from Steele and Markus Toves—provided the highlights in the match, as the two plays were executed well with goalkeeper Merrick Toves and midfielder Taka Borja feeding their teammates.

Borja was getting ready for the free kick around the

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The NMI Men's U20 National Team's Richard Steele gets a high-five from teammate Kohtaro Goto after scoring a goal in their game against Guam last Wednesday night at the Guam Football Association National Training Center.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The NMI Women's U18 National Team's Audrey Castro takes the corner kick during their game against Guam last Wednesday night at the Guam Football Association National Training Center.

Nickole Salem golden in jiu jitsu tilt

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Nickole Salem made her home islands proud after winning two gold medals and a bronze in the New Breed Jiu Jitsu Tournament held last Saturday in Greenville, South Carolina.

The 5-year-old daughter of Niko Salem, a U.S. Marine from San Antonio, and Maria Victoria, from Garapan, topped the 4-5 years, 41-50 lbs Gi (uniform) and the 4-5 years, 41-50 No-Gi (no uniform) competitions and took third place in the higher level 6-7 years, 45-55 lbs No-Gi (no uniform) division.

The student at Lambs Elementary School in North Charleston was simply overjoyed after doing well in the tournament.

"I wanted to win because I wanted to make my family and friends proud and I love jiu jitsu and fighting," she said.

Her mother cried tears of joy after Nickole's dominant

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nickole Salem shows offs her two gold medals and a bronze after competing in the New Breed Jiu Jitsu Tournament last Saturday in Greenville, South Carolina.

Australia eyes sending athletics, weightlifting teams

» NZ may send beach volleyball, weightlifting

MARK RABAGO

Staff performs maintenance on the countdown clock for the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 at the Oleai Sports Com-

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

With 115 days to go before the start of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022, Australia and New Zealand finally have given an idea of what teams they'll be sending to 11th staging of the quadrennial event.

Pacific Games Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta said Australia is looking at taking part in two sports in the Mini Games, while they're still not sure what teams New Zealand will be sending in the competition set from June 17 to 25.

"Australia will be sending their athletics and weightlifting teams, but I've yet to see the number of athletes from Australia. For New Zealand, they will be communicating directly with the games organizing committee as they will be soon reaching out to the individual federations that will be attending. However, my understanding is they will be sending beach volleyball and weightlift-

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